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ABSTRACT

Focusing on how "North Town" Anglos and Mexicanos have related to each other and have dealt with the problems of economic inequality and racial discrimination, the study characterized the ethnic relations into three major historical periods: the "Rancho" Era (1900-30), the "Colonia" Era (1930-60), and the Contemporary Period (1960-75). During the "Rancho" era, ethnic relations took place under an extremely exploitative, paternalistic sharecropper system, supported by open racism, strict social segregation, and effective Anglo political machines. Within this environment, an extremely poor Mexicano laboring class created its own communities and sustained its cultural traditions. The "Colonia" era was marked by major transformations in the local labor system and "Mexican Town" as an independent community. Mexicanos began developing their own economic and political leaders and organizations. They began challenging the earlier patterns of economic exploitation and social segregation. The Contemporary period was marked by heightened Mexicano-Anglo confrontations over the control of the city, school, and county governments. This period saw the rapid rise and decline of a Chicano third party, the "Raza Unida", and the aggressive and conciliatory responses of local Anglos, who organized into the Better Government League. The present ethnic confrontation represents a process of "historical retribution" to some and a "sickness", a "cancer" in the American way of life to others. To most, the conflict is a great source of pain and confusion; and "North Towners" are struggling to recapture a more harmonious community life. (Author/NQ)

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FROM PEONES TO POLITICOS:
ETHNIC RELATIONS IN A SOUTH
TEXAS TOWN, 1900 TO 1975

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
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Preface and Acknowledgements
For North Town Readers

Customarily, the authors of any book profusely thank various relatives, fellow researchers, and community members for making their work possible. If you live with a community of people for any extended period of time, you accumulate many debts of gratitude. In the main, North Towners were very open and receptive to us. A few people avoided us and remained suspicious and unavailable for comment. A few raised legitimate questions about our motives and intent. But so many people shared their time and feelings with us that we were, at times, overwhelmed with information and feelings of our own. It is a strange thing for someone to "study" a community ; no doubt, we were not always able to avoid being "pests" or "snoopers." We tried to talk to a wide variaty of people, and to that end we thank all of you for your time and cooperation. We enjoyed living in North Town and count a number of people there as personal friends.

A word should be said about the veracity of this study and its methods. In the initial stages of the study one very perceptive community leader asked, "Do you think you really know what the truth is?" Another person asked me on a later occasion, "Do you really think you can understand our life here without actually living it for many years?" Those are both very profound philosophical questions that deserve an answer, but there probably is no easy or satisfactory answer.

In reconstructing what happened in North Town, in the past and as we lived it, we tried to record what people said and felt.

We tried to capture different points-of-view, on each historical event and character which has been described. It was usually not easy to figure out how some event *really* happened. Often North Towners themselves disagreed about the "truth" of their own community. It seems that there is no one "truth" about North Town. So quite obviously, we have not written *the truth* about your town.

We *have* tried very hard, however, to be objective and truthful and fair-minded. We interviewed hundreds of people, went to many community meetings, and read many local records. We attempted to see different sides and to approximate the ideal of a truth. But despite all the effort, we have produced only an interpretation; *our interpretation* of life in North Town. How much truth and how much fiction it contains is a hard question to answer. In answer to the original questions posed by North Towners, we are not so deluded to think that we have really discovered "the truth"; nor are we so self-important as to think that one year of experience in a place puts us on a par with North Towners. But we tried, and hopefully, there are things in the manuscript that even North Towners did not realize.

Our main apology to North Towners is that we were not able to get the manuscript prepared earlier. Our work schedules and the unforeseen time necessary to put all these materials together simply prevented an earlier return. We should indicate that approximately a dozen North Towners, from various persuasions, have been requested to read and comment on the manuscript. After a month has elapsed, I will return to collect their impressions of the manuscript. Hopefully, the readers will write down some of their thoughts. We hope to have a discussion with each reader and tape their views. A selection of these views will be included in the appendix of this manuscript for any non-North Town readers' information. Since this manuscript is an initial draft, some of the readers' comments may lead to changes in the final version.

In regards to the form and content of this manuscript, it should be added that this is a "rough draft." By and large, we hope it is relatively free of grammatical and spelling errors and is clear and well-organized. It is your commentary and suggestions on our interpretations of events that will be particularly helpful. The content in this manuscript includes the bulk of the materials collected on the history, social life, economics and politics of North Town. Only a small portion of the material collected from observations and interviews in the schools with teachers and students has been included. We intend to develop the educational materials into a separate manuscript about the feelings, groups, and relations of teachers and students. This project will take at least one and possibly two more years. We hope that community members, teachers and former students will also read and comment on this manuscript.

Douglas Foley
February 7, 1977
Austin, Texas

Introduction

This is a study of how one small community in South Texas has been changing since 1900. This story is about how North Town Anglos and Mexicanos have related to each other, how they have dealt with the problems of economic inequality and racial discrimination. To describe the changing relations and conflict between these two groups, we have characterized the ethnic relations of North Town into three major historical periods: 1) the Rancho Era (1900 to 1930), 2) the Colonia Era (1930 to 1960) and 3) the Contemporary Period (1960 to 1975).

The Rancho era from roughly the late 1890's to the mid-1930's represents the traditional pattern of ethnic relations during the rise of commercial agriculture in this region. Ethnic relations during this era took place under an extremely exploitative, paternalistic sharecropper system and was supported by open racism, strict social segregation, and effective Anglo political machines. Within this oppressive and paternalistic environment an extremely poor Mexicano laboring class adapted. They created their own communities and sustained their cultural traditions in this segregated way of life.

The Colonia era from roughly the mid-1930's to the early 1960's is a period of rapid social change. This period is marked by major transformations in the local labor system and "Mexican Town" as an independent community. The North Town Mexicanos began developing their own economic and political leaders and ethnic political organizations. Increasingly, they began challenging the earlier patterns of economic exploitation and social segregation. Such challenges began occurring as the most extreme forms of economic exploitation, the influence of local Anglo politicians and patrons, and the beliefs about Anglo racial superiority became less important forms of control over the Mexicano people.

The contemporary period could well include the 1960's and the 1970's, since overt Mexicano political challenges actually began around 1960. We have chosen, however, to concentrate on the years from 1972 to 1975. These years are marked by heightened Mexicano-Anglo confrontations over the control of the city, school, and county governments. The contemporary section highlights the rapid rise and decline of a Chicano third party, the Raza Unida, and the aggressive and conciliatory responses of local Anglos, who organized into a group called the Better Government League. The present ethnic confrontation represents to some a process of "historical retribution." To others this confrontation represents a "sickness," a "cancer" in the American way of life. To most local residents the conflict is a great source of pain and confusion, and North Towners are struggling to recapture a more harmonious community life.

Before presenting our history of North Town ethnic relations, we need to briefly describe North Town and its surrounding region, our general research methodology, and the specific responsibilities of the co-authors in this study.

North Town and the Surrounding Region

North Town was approximately 6,000 in population, at the time of this study. The community is located in a South Texas region commonly characterized as a winter vegetable growing center. Such areas have a long growing season (260 days), and export large quantities of fresh vegetables to the rest of the United States. Historically, the counties of this region are part of a rather narrow strip of counties south of San Antonio and north of the Rio Grande Valley area. Developmentally, this area can be considered a transitional or frontier region that lay between the earlier Mexican society based on the Rio Grande and the developing Anglo society of central and south-central Texas. This general geographic region did not become developed or settled to any degree until after the Civil War. The towns are generally much younger than those in the Valley or in other parts of Central Texas. Further, the major development of the towns as multi-ethnic communities of Anglos and Mexicanos, and a few blacks, did not occur until the late-1890's and early 1900's.

North county belongs to a particular contemporary sub-region of this more general historical region. This sub-region roughly includes eight counties with a population of 94,461 (1970 Census) centered in approximately thirty towns and settlements and scattered over 14,629 square miles. There are several ways that these counties are a functioning ecological, administrative, and economic unit. Although soil types, topology and the water table vary considerably, geographers classify this area as a common economic region with a similar set of ecological adaptations. The widespread production of fresh produce vegetables links the growers, truckers, packers, and labor crews of the region, and there is considerable exchange and labor movement across the counties. Second, the local marketing system of auction barns, the cattle breeders'association and exchanges between pure-bred and cross-bred herds also tend to link the region together economically. Third, administratively, there are a number of ways the eight counties form a region. State welfare; agricultural research and extension; education; and health programs, with some variation, generally administer their programs to this set of counties as a region. To a degree, then, the pattern of changing ethnic relationships described in North Town tend to hold true for this geo-political region of South Texas. How generalizable this study is to the Rio Grande Valley or other parts of the Southwest is a subject of considerable interest, but not a question on which we can easily speculate.

A Note on Methodology

Studying a community which is deeply factionalized and mobilized for a political struggle is perhaps the most difficult of all field situations. In other writings we hope to discuss at greater length the technical methods and problems of the field work. Generally, we used all the traditional participant-observation approaches of community studies. We went to many community meetings; interviewed several hundred people; and reviewed local historical documents from the city, county, schools, two churches and the local paper. We also collected approximately fifty life histories, many from ten to forty hours of interviewing, from both men and women in various occupational roles. Finally, since a study of the local educational institutions was a major goal of the original grant, two field workers spent approximately 500 hours observing in the local elementary and secondary schools.

It is always difficult to convey the "method" of a community study to laymen, or even to professional research colleagues not experienced in or favoring such methods. Only a technical essay could communicate the empirical basis of this particular study and the value of informants, field notes and daily participant-observation. Yet, we have undoubtedly filtered these data through our own value systems, in spite of professional training and methods. There are undoubtedly some errors of fact and of interpretation, despite many hours of cross-checking information. A good descriptive and interpretive community study seeks to create a substantially accurate portrayal or characterization of the actions and feelings of local residents. We have tried to capture what seemed to be the essence of and major directions that Mexicano and Anglo relations have been taking in North Town. How well we have collected and portrayed this is at least partially reflected in the appendix, which includes comments from local residents who have read and criticized this manuscript.

The Research Team and Individual Responsibilities

One final note is also needed in the team nature of this research, and the relative contributions and responsibilities of the various co-authors. Generally, this monograph is very much the product of a team effort of what might be called a research collective. We all interacted extensively and shared ideas freely, thus, it is often impossible to separate the individual contributions. These "rap sessions" or accountings were almost a weekly, even daily occurrence, and many of the conclusions and interpretations ultimately used herein come out of staff interactions. Often notes were taken, and tapes were made of these sessions to capture our collective ideas and feelings. Each person brought different concerns and insights to the situation, and invariably we all pushed and led each other to a fuller understanding.

Douglas Foley was the director and senior member of the research effort. This means that he got the initial research grants from the National Institute of Education, hired the staff, and endlessly harassed them for ideas and data from their separate research sites. He also spent twelve months in North Town and has returned there a number of weekends since the initial field work. He is responsible for the overall conception, organization and writing of the manuscript. In this regard, he is indebted to all the listed authors and to other co-researchers, Walter Smith and Jean Meadowcroft, not listed. Some of Walter Smith's ideas on power and ethnic movements are undoubtedly a part of this manuscript. Mr. Smith collected a great deal of important comparative data during a year of field work in neighboring Aztlán City ,the home of the Raza Unida Party. A portion of his field work on this controversial case was written up as a doctoral dissertation.

Ignacio Lozano, a native of this region has also played a central and varied role in this research. He collected data for the historical sections and on the Raza Unida. He spent fifteen months in the field in two communities, and his sensitivity to and connections with the South Texas Mexicano were perhaps the single most important factor in collecting and understanding the various Mexicano points of view.

Clarice Mota spent nine months interviewing North Town Mexicanas on a wide range of topics, and her data on community history and her own writings on the Mexicano family and social life have been incorporated in Chapters two and four. Some of her field work on the 1974 campaign and political leadership was also used to write chapter six. Ms. Mota, a native of Brazil, was also a key factor in collecting and understanding the various Mexicano points of view. She continued to work in North Town, particularly on the role of women in the movimiento and is preparing other materials on this topic

Donald Post spent fifteen months commuting weekly to North and South Town developing a study on ethnic competition for control of schools. He also collected a great deal of demographic data on the region and wrote the sections of chapter five that describe the key political and school issues during 1972 and 1973. His own work on North Town greatly assisted Douglas Foley, the primary ethnographer in that community, to enter and to better understand North Town. Further, his comparative work in South Town, although not incorporated, has actually added a third reference point for interpreting events in North Town.

A final member of the research team, Jean Meadowcroft, has not been listed as a co-author. Ms. Meadowcroft spent four months in the North Town elementary schools. Her work in the schools was valuable for understanding the attitudes of Anglo teachers and how they were adapting to the new Chicano activism. These materials will be published in a subsequent monograph concentrating on education in these towns.

This is, then, a very simplified breakdown of the primary individual inputs and responsibilities. We all owe each other so much that it is hard to know where one's efforts and ideas end and where the other person's begins. This has been a collective enterprise. The sum of what has been produced would not have been possible without the variety of skills and backgrounds of the total collective. Indeed, it is clear to us that the idea of a single, all-purpose ethnographer in the multi-ethnic communities of a complex society is not altogether reasonable and methodologically defensible. There is much to be gained by having a racially and sexually diverse research group.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge our gratitude for two grants, no. NE-G-0-72-[illegible]943 and no. NE-G-00-3-0117, and a great deal of patience and support from the National Institute of Education, the Anthropology Panel Studies section. Although NIE financed this particular study, they in no way are responsible for the views and results expressed herein. The entire above staff, and particularly its senior member, Douglas Foley, bear all the responsibilities for any errors or inaccuracies.

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PART ONE: LIFE IN THE RANCHO ERA, 1900 TO 1930

Chapter 1

The Political Economy of the Ranchos

This geographic region of South Texas was historically settled after the Mexican American War of 1846. The area was originally on the outer fringe of a Spanish settlement in the Rio Grande Valley. The Spanish planned to develop all the land below the Nueces River to the Rio Grande Valley into a colony called Nuevo Santander.[1] Many Spanish colonial settlers were granted porciones (land grants), and a number of settlements and towns were established on both banks of the Rio Grande River. After the Revolution of 1824, Mexico became an independent nation, and the Mexican government administered this area as the state of Tamaulipas. During this period, a small number of Anglo settlers also began moving into the Rio Grande Valley area which the Republic of Texas sought to annex. The Texans wanted to set the boundary of Tamaulipas at the Rio Grande River. This proposed boundary was much further South than the Nueces River, thus annexing the entire area of Tamaulipas.[2] The ensuing story of annexation, the battles, disputed land titles, abandoned haciendas, and the flight of the original Mexicano settlers has yet to be told.

This region was on the fringe of this Mexican state, but it was generally much less inhabited and settled than the Valley society. Several Indian tribes controlled this stretch of sparsely inhabited sandy brush land. They were hunting and gathering groups not unlike the Plains Indians that had been pushed into the area by the onslaught of Anglo settlers from North and Central Texas.[3] There were also apparently a number of porciones (land grants) and Mexican settlers in this fringe area. The Mexican settlers that came this far North of the Rio Grande Valley region undoubtedly encountered serious problems with Indians and later with the influx of Anglo settlers around the time of the Mexican American War of 1848. Further, those remaining had to re-survey and establish their lands under the state of Texas. One local history describes this "troublesome" animosity between the remaining early Mexican settlers and the new Anglo settlers.[4]

Generally, the first Anglo settlers in the counties studied arrived from 1850 to 1860. North Town local historians indicate that there were three Anglo settlers in their county by the early 1850's.[5] In nearby Aztlán City most of the settlers came in after the Mexican American War. Many of the original settlers were veterans of the war and were given state land grants on the river-bottom land.[6] Most Anglo settlement came, however, after the Civil War, and a number of large ranches and cattle companies were established by the 1880's. This study did not explore precisely how these early Anglo settlers got their lands, or the extent that the original Mexican settlers resisted and were forced from their lands. Recent studies suggest that the settlement of the Southwestern United States was often a bitter struggle between organized coalitions of Anglo settlers and political officials and aggressive Mexicano resistance movements.[7]

In this marginal, poorly developed region there were, however, probably no dramatic battles or well-known, organized Anglo or

Mexicano groups such as the King Ranch of the Valley or the Las Gorras Blancas of New Mexico. Anglos apparently had no well-organized political machines in this region. There was also no well-developed Spanish American elite class who became collaborators with the Anglo bankers, lawyers, merchants and politicians.

The conquest tactics in this desolate, unsettled area were probably simple and relatively unspectacular. As in much of the Southwest, Mexican settlers, through a series of international wars and treaties, were left to fend for themselves against the flood of Anglo settlers. The few scattered Mexican settlers became victims of the general absence of law and community. The Anglos, with the language and laws in their favor undoubtedly overwhelmed the tenuous Mexican settlements. There were undoubtedly disputes and misunderstandings over land, shootings on lonely country trails, and legalized expropriations through the Anglo county judges and sheriffs. A few of the more enterprising, politically astute Mexicans survived, some as land owners and officials.[8] But the great majority of Mexican settlers lost their lands and retreated back to their homeland.

During the early development of this rangeland, from 1860 to 1880, many small Anglo ranchers sold small numbers of cattle to Kansas drivers. These small ranchers shared the open range and lived in tiny settlements along the main San Antonio-Mexico routes.[9] By the early 1880's two important technological innovations, the railroad and barbed-wire, had rapidly altered the entire region.

The fencing changed the open-range system of cattle ranching. Many of the original homesteaders were driven out. As in other frontier areas of the great plains, the original Spanish land grants were re-surveyed and perfected. Eastern, foreign and big city capital poured in to form large absentee cattle companies to make quick profits.[10] A few of the cattle companies and original settlers succeeded in consolidating large tracts of land (30,000 to 100,000 acreas).[11]

By the 1890's this region had experienced several economic transformations. It changed from a sparsely settled territory of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas to small settlements of Anglo homesteaders. Forty years later the region was dominated by large, fenced ranchers and cattlemen. At this point the area had become predominately Anglo. There were, however, a number of Mexican vaqueros (cowboys), a few wage laborers in the settlements and a growing number of itinerant migratory farm workers. Prior to the twentieth century the region was an excellent frontier for the expansion of commercial agriculture. It was near the growing urban areas of central Texas but was still sparsely settled enough to have cheap land. Given its cheap land and labor and mild climate, the North County region was a promising agricultural area.

In the 1890's several national trends encouraged new settlers to come into this region. First, the scourge of the boll weevil and exhaustion of southern and East Texas lands gradually pushed a number of cotton farmers westward in search of cheap land.[12] Second, other descendants from earlier, (1830's) predominately German settlements in Central Texas also migrated south to this less-populated area. Third, by the early 1900's this region had become the site for a number of large land promotion schemes. Several of the earlier cattle companies and other speculators from the urban areas began dividing up huge, relatively unprofitable ranches. North Town was one of the original boom towns that survived and grew. Much of this land had been acquired for less than a dollar an acre, and it could be subdivided into small ten and twenty acre lots and small city lots for as much as one hundred dollars an acre. These companies advertised all over the United States to attract what locals called "the suckers."

The companies usually surveyed a town site and built a hotel and several stores to accommodate the prospective buyers. They brought them in by the train-loads and promised cheap, fertile land, flowing artesian wells, and a growing season twice that of the Midwest. The potential for a fast profit on cotton and winter vegetables attracted many poor farmers from the Midwest. It also attracted a number of inexperienced greenhorns from the cities, and second and third generation Central Texas settlers. The increases in farm owners and operators, tenants, and general population is reflected in the census data.[13] From 1900 to 1930 this area became a mixed economy of small farmers and ranchers. The development of larger labor forces and urban settlements soon followed.

Most of this agricultural development in cotton and vegetables was on the prime flat, river-flood plain land and on the lighter soils. The smaller (2,000 to 5,000 acres) and medium-sized (5,000 to 20,000 acres) ranches were left undisturbed by this influx of small cotton and vegetable farmers. Likewise, some of the large absentee cattle companies and most of the larger family-owned ranches (20,000 to 60,000) did not sell out or subdivide. The coming of commercial agriculture did not initially disturb or destroy the predominant place of ranching, but it ultimately made land less available and more expensive. These developments made the future expansion of ranching more dependent on modernization through innovations in breeding stock, grasses, production time, and range utilization.

Unlike, however, the days of fencing and fence cutting, ranchers and farmers were not at war with each other. Old-timers report that the ranchers, who often had more land and money, did generally think of themselves as "better than dirt farmers." They rode horses and carried guns and sometimes lived up to their reputations as hard-drinking, tough, and "good" with the ladies. Several of the older Mexicanos said it was common practice for ranchers to have a querida (a Mexican lady) whom they kept and visited on his ranch. People generally described farmers as a quieter, "less showy lot," people that "stuck to home and tended their land." Despite a number of differences in style and wealth, the transition from a ranching to ranching/farming economy was made smoothly.

The influx of hundreds of small farmers and a labor-intensive cash crop economy, however, ultimately created a dramatic transformation. This great influx of people during the early 1900's created small, county seat market towns. These small urban centers provided the produce-packing and shipping facilities, the cattle pens, the cotton gins and loading docks of the new economy. As the market towns developed, more merchants and bankers and schoolmen followed to service the new settlements.

Along with this influx of Anglo farmers and townspeople came a steady stream of Mexican labor.[14] Initially many came across to work during the crop seasons, always to return home to Mexico. These temporary immigrants entered with ease. The border guards usually had lists of farmers and ranchers needing help, and the guards did not restrict the illegal entrants. Families of Mexicanos would arrive at the border, pay the guard a nickel and get the name of a rancher.

There were also many other ways of entering and finding work. There was el coyote, the smuggler who brought the immigrants to the enganche (literally, to hook), or labor contractor. These border labor contractors organized crews of cotton and vegetable pickers and took them to the local growers.[15] Often, the crews were taken North on the train to live in tent camps under armed guards. These crews moved around the area to pick crops, and then the labor contractors brought the crews back to the border towns and Mexico. Quite often these contractors gave a percentage to the border guards to assure a constant supply of labor. Others operated independently with the smuggled labor, and most used both or whatever was available.

Two factors were constantly mentioned by the old-timers as reasons for migrating. First, they were looking for a better living and more money in the growing South Texas ares. Second, many also were seeking to escape the great turmoil caused by the Mexican revolution. By the early 1900's Mexico had gone through a series of reforms and revolutions that greatly altered the relationship of the peasants to the hacienda land system. There were many landless peasants in Mexico seeking a better way of life.[16] Most of the immigrants emphasized the poverty and turmoil in Mexico and their hope that America would offer more opportunity. During the 1900 to 1920 period, thousands of Mexican families that were temporary migrants decided to settle in the United States. Early censuses are notoriously inaccurate, due to the illegal immigrants and part-time residents, but they partially reflect this rapid increase.[17]

These immigrants generally settled in three different types of settings. First, some settled in the small "Mexican Towns," las colonias, which grew on the opposite side of the Anglo market towns. Second, a much larger percentage settled in smaller hamlets in the more distant parts of these counties. Where cotton farming was extensive or where a large irrigated produce operation existed, amall Mexicano settlements developed. They usually centered around a cotton gin, a general store, a small interdenominational church, and a one-room school. These small communities often consisted of several Anglo families and perhaps thirty to forty Mexicano families. In several cases, the store and the gin were owned by the largest farmer or rancher in the settlement. The third settlement pattern of the Mexican family was to live on the individual farms and ranches with their Anglo _patrones_. The majority of early Mexicano settlers living outside the towns were scattered throughout the isolated rural areas of the county. Every rancher and farmer had several Mexican families permanently living on their place.

The Early Agricultural Production-Labor Units

During this early boom period, the cotton farmers slowly trickled in from other Texas and Southern areas. They bought the land cheaply, two to ten dollars an acre, and set up small communities. The typical cotton farm was from eighty to 160 acres. Each man and mule team could generally plant and cultivate a _tiro_ (forty to fifty acres). Those Anglo farmers who had more land than they could work contracted a Mexican tenant or two to farm the rest of his land.

There were basically two types of share-rent contracts used. Either the tenant would be a _mediero_ and farm the land on a fifty/fifty split of the crop. Or, he would be a _quartero_ and split the cotton crop twenty five/seventy five and the corn crop thirty three/sixty six. Under the first system the *patrones* provided everything necessary for production, the animals, plow, tools, seeds, and an advance of money for living expenses. In return, the Mexican family provided the labor and gave up fifty percent of the crop when harvested. Under the second system, which gradually became somewhat common in the late 1910's, the Anglo land owner provided only the land and, if necessary, a cash advance. The Mexican sharecropper or *sembrador* used his own mules and tools and seed, and ultimately shared twenty-five percent of the harvest.

This type of share-farming operation was very much of a family-based labor system. Anglo growers emphasized that the bigger the family the better the tenant. Big families provided more labor. They generally worked harder and stayed longer, often because of their debts and the difficulty of moving.

Yet, even though most sharecroppers had large families, they and the owners found it necessary to hire extra hands. They frequently supplemented the family labor system by hiring younger males or landless families from the nearby hamlets. Occasionally, even the sons of *vaqueros* (cowboys) sought to make extra money picking cotton. In other cases the share-croppers exchanged labor with neighboring families whose crop came earlier. Several families would plan and coordinate their planting so it was staggered and labor exchanges were more possible. On larger cotton farms (500 to 1,000 acres), however, the owner generally imported crews from the border towns or the Rio Grande Valley to quickly finish the harvest. By the early 1920's there were an increasing number of crews coming into the area to handle the increasing cotton acreage.

Once picked, the cotton was hauled to the local or town gin for processing and baling. The ginners kapt most of the seed to pay for the ginning costs. Those farmers who had extra capital and planned ahead kept part of the seed for the next year. Once the cotton was compressed into bales, the farmers hauled it by wagon to the towns or settlements having rail depots. Cotton brokers then bought the bales and sent them to large cotton brokering companies in Houston or San Antonio. Some of the larger cotton farmers occasionally tried their luck at shipping and selling their cotton in the commodity exchanges in the cities. Generally, however, the local small growers, both owners and tenants, sold their cotton to local brokers at the prices given to them. Occasionally the well-to-do local farmers and ranchers and merchants speculated on purchasing, storing and shipping the cotton.

The small dry cotton farms and the small irrigated vegetable farms were generally self-sufficient. Most farmers raised a few hogs and chickens for meat. They also planted large gardens and preserved the vegetables and fruits from their place. Nearly every farmer had a milk cow or two, and those with brush land or extra grazing land ran small cow-calf operations. The larger cow-calf operators might have a bull and twenty-five cows. The smaller ones might have ten or fifteen cows but no breeding bull. When calves were weaned, they were sold to local ranchers with much larger grazing areas for finishing, or they were sold to brokers from large cattle companies outside the region. The small cotton farm was very difficult to operate successfully. The lack of water and weevil control, and the unpredictable cotton market often made such diversification necessary. Calves were a steady income, and there were always enough meat and vegetables to get by cheaply in lean years.

Vegetable farming in the area varied considerably from county to county and was restricted to areas with shallow flowing artesian wells or with river basin gravity irrigation.[18] A few small truck farms existed in the early 1900's. These thirty to forty acre plots were used primarily for onions. The real boom in vegetables came, however, after land speculators had drawn thousands of farmers to the area from 1909 to the early 1920's.[19] A number of these land schemes quickly folded. Some of these new farmers were poorly organized and financed; others lacked water, and many of them were simply unable to adapt to the Southwest brush country. Several early settlers described the problems they had learning new watering, labor, and packing techniques. They also had to clear the land and drill artesian wells, which soon had to be replaced with costly pumps.

But even those who adjusted were faced with the problem of selling what they grew. Even more than the dry-land cotton farmers, the small vegetable farmers were at the mercy of the packers and brokers operating in the market town. The primary produce market was in San Antonio, consequently, few farmers were able to pack and ship their own produce in the early days.

In the areas where a land boom was promoted, most of the small farmers had already left or moved into the surrounding towns by 1917. Some of their land was bought and farmed by larger operators who survived, but the vast majority of the small plots and acreages remained fallow and unused or reverted back into grazing land.[20] In other counties and sections of the region, vegetable growing increased. Small truck farmers (forty to sixty acres) with favorable sites, i.e., good shallow wells and close to the rail lines, prospered. Larger, diversified farm operators (300 to 800 acres) who combined vegetable growing with dry grain farming and small cow-calf operations also succeeded. Before the 1920's, however, the region was not spectacularly successful as a major vegetable growing center.[21]

The development of vegetable farming greatly stimulated the migration of Mexicano laborers into the region. All the planting, cleaning, and harvesting was done by hand, and the labor-to-land ratio for vegetables was considerably higher than for cotton or cattle. Intensive vegetable farming often affected Mexicano settlement patterns. Several small North County settlements of thirty or forty Mexican families were centered around pump or gravity irrigation systems for vegetables. Such farming operations required a number of permanent farm laborers for planting, transplanting (for onions), weeding, and maintaining the water system.

Harvest labor for the vegetable industry was recruited in several ways before 1920. The large vegetable farmers with several hundred acres often brought in organized crews from the border towns. Local growers developed contacts with different border contratistas through the mails and occasional shopping visits to the border towns. Nearly all of these crew laborers were male immigrants who received temporary, informal permission to enter. A second source of vegetable harvesting labor was the steady stream of mojados (wet backs) passing through the area on their own. The third and most frequent source for small farmers was excess local labor from the surrounding farms, hamlets, and market towns. The small but growing number of landless laborers permanently residing in the towns and with settled families in the hamlets increased rapidly during the first two decades. In addition, the sharecroppers and their sons also frequently worked the local winter vegetables.

Finally, in times of crises, e.g., when the crop was over ripening or storms were coming, the entire hamlet of Anglo farmers and smaller ranchers and their Mexicano laborers would help their neighbors pick the crop. Although the bulk of local labor was not yet highly organized into a crew labor system, the patrones knew where and when to find workers. Several old-time Anglo farmers recalled that there was always an excess of labor, that "the Mexicans in those days were always there when you needed them." This surplus of Mexican labor was an important factor in keeping wages low and in stabilizing the Mexicano population into subordinate social and economic positions.

The third major type of agricultural production unit in the North Town region was the cattle ranch. This type of production unit and its labor needs are relatively easy to characterize, but it is difficult to describe a "typical" ranch. With the advent of fencing and Northern markets, the cattle industry of this region grew dramatically.[22] As in other range areas, urban investors bought large tracts of cheap land (one dollar an acre) and started what were initially profitable cattle companies.[23] These large tracts were often over 100,000 acres and were coordinated with other large ranching operations in Mexico. No more than one or two of these companies existed per county, but they often occupied as much as 1/7th to 1/6th of the county lands.

By the 1900's North County ranches were well-established. The large ranches (5,000 to 35,000 acres) were predominately in the hands of original settlers and were strictly "big steer" ranches. During this period, a county with a diversified farming/ranching economy would have no more than thirty or forty of these large ranches. Most of these large ranches also had several hundred acres of hay and grain land to supplement their natural grasses. But as several old-timers put it, "the real cattlemen didn't fool around with farming." Very few large ranchers had many cotton share croppers, and they certainly were not "fooling around with onions and spinach."

Large ranches generally had several Mexican vaqueros and their families and an assortment of young, drifting Mexican and Anglo cowboys. Usually a larger ranch (200,000 acres and 1,000 cattle) might have eight or ten permanent vaqueros. This labor ratio would depend upon how many sons the rancher had, the rains, the market, and many other factors. These cowboys lived in one-room houses or in the all-male bunkhouses. They were paid a dollar a day and board and generally worked year-round from sun-up to sunset. These men were responsible for working cattle, rounding up, sorting, weaning, branding, doctoring and driving them to market. They also helped produce and store the winter hay and grain crops and maintained the fencing and water systems. During round-up time or tick-dipping time, the number of extra hands needed was often more than double the regular hands. Generally vaqueros from other ranches or drifting cowhands were used during round-ups.

A second, more diversified, smaller ranch was more prevalent in this region. For every large specialized ranch there were perhaps three smaller ranches (1,000-5,000 acres) that combined staple cash cropping with their cow-calf grazing operation. Such ranches were referred to as stock farms and often had 300 to 400 acres of cotton under six or eight share croppers. A stock farm might also have 100 to 200 acres of grazing land for 100 cows and calves run by two or three vaqueros.

As cotton became a big money crop in the early 1900's and cheap labor became available, ranchers began to diversify into cropping. Such ranch/farming operations were usually located on the flatter, lighter soils contiguous to the small farmers. Since these ranchers also raised crops, they often had several permanent Mexican families living on the ranch. Although these smaller ranchers made most of their profits from cotton cropping, they still considered themselves ranchers, not farmers. In early North County these small ranchers or stock farmers and the large cotton farmers (500 to 800 acres) were the most common agricultural operators.

The shipping and marketing system for all cattle ranchers was basically the same. Cattle often came into the region from East Texas or Mexico. Stocker cattle from nine months old to yearlings were brought into these counties of South Texas for grazing. Many of the larger ranching operations with extra or leased pasture supplemented their own breeding herds with these "stockers." This was especially true in wet years when the grasses were good and the brush country could support as many as one cow per ten acres. During average years the ratio was generally one cow per twenty acres and as low as one cow per thirty acres during dry years. It was not unusual for the larger cattlemen to have as many stockers as their own calves.

During the early days this area was known as "big steer" country. Ranchers generally let their cattle graze for two to four years before selling them. The common breeds, herefords and long-horn-crosses would often be well over 1200 pounds before they were marketed. The cattle were generally marketed by rail to San Antonio or Houston or sometimes farther north to Fort Worth or Kansas City. They were rounded up and brought to the stock pens in the market town. Generally they were watered and fed overnight and shipped out the next day. Most of the cattle were bought by brokers from the big packing companies. But a few of the larger ranchers shipped their own cattle. They hoped to hit the market and make a better profit. The North Town region was, then, predominately a cattle breeding and grazing area. There was virtually no finishing of cattle with grain and supplemental feeds. Until the thirties the retailers and consumers accepted the older, heavier animals of this "big steer" country.

All of the North County agricultural operations, in varying degrees, faced similar climatic and market problems with labor-intensive, hand and animal technology.[24] The region was potentially productive with adequate water and a good deal of management and luck.[25] As one of the early ranchers declared:

> Many people never learned how to live with this land. You got pretty good soil, if you treat it right. And you got enough water, if you sink down a good well and pump it right. You got plenty of labor, plenty of people to help clear this ole' brush country. And we Americans, the ones of us who came there in the early days was a pretty tough lot. Fact is, I think we are a dying breed. Seems like this country is going soft nowadays. But for damn sure a lotta people who come here didn't survive. Down here you just gotta treat the land right. It ain't like back where you are from where that top soil is deep and black and it'll rain like hell during the summer. No sir, we have to fight for everything we get down here.

As he indicated, this area was productive, but the margin for mismanagement or failure was great. It was a fragile kind of relationship that the farmer and rancher had to watch and nurture well. Perhaps the most important and uncontrollable factor was the market and its highly fluctuating prices. Cotton farmers and vegetable growers were continually victims of declining prices and the problems of marketing their crops somewhere. As one farmer exclaimed, "you have to be a gambler or a damn fool to try and grow stuff for a profit." The prices for cattle also fluctuated considerably, but ranchers were generally more able to weather droughts and ticks and hookworms than small farmers were. The large ranches tended to have fewer debts and lower labor costs. Cattle, despite the unstable market, were safer and easier to produce than perishable vegetables or delicate cotton plants. Although few cattlemen would disagree that ranching was an easy livelihood, this region was more suitable for a pastoral economy. The lands were basically rangeland. Farming such lands required considerable skill and luck.

Perhaps the most manipulable, controllable factor in the rancho economy was labor. It was abundant and cheap. This early South Texas society was built upon the first generation of Mexican immigrants. The amount and type of hand labor on these early North County farms and ranches was back-breaking. The hard, undulating clay soils were difficult to plow with mules. The hauling of crops over dirt roads was difficult. Everything was loaded, planted, cultivated, and harvested by hand in hot or cold weather. The stoop labor of cotton and vegetable pickers made the workers age quickly. The vaqueros frequently suffered injuries trying to rope, drive, and handle steers.

Yet one particular form of labor stands out as basic, dangerous, and extremely burdensome. Everyone who attempted to use these brush lands had to clear it and continually fight the mesquite brush. Soil conservationists argue that this area deteriorated into a brushland. Mismanagement and overgrazing during the boom years of the 1880's, ruined this tall-grass land. When the grass cover became thin, the mesquite took over. Old-timers claim that the Mexican cattle brought into the region also helped spread the mesquite. During the long drives the cattle would eat the sweet mesquite beans and deposit them around on the open range. The more the early ranchers mismanaged the ranges, the more the area became a brushland which required constant clearing.

Clearing land at the turn of the century required a great deal of hand labor with crude grub hoes. The Mexicano laborers cut down, rooted, and dragged the mesquite into piles and burned it. The cactus, which was used for cattle feed, was also burned. The laborers burned the cactus thorns with flame throwers that used large pressurized tanks of gas. Not infrequently these crude pumps exploded and seriously injured the workers. As one old laborer explained "this work aged we Mexicanos very quickly. We became old men before the very eyes of our Maker." The clearing of pasture land was a never ending battle. Even a well-cleared pasture returns to brush land within five years, if the mesquite sprouts were not continuously grubbed. The intensively cultivated farmlands will, however, stay clean while in use. In a very real sense, the Mexicano laborers tamed and improved this land with their grub hoes and their flame throwers.

The Social Relationship Between Landlord and Laborers

Both Anglos and Mexicanos worked hard in these early small settlements. The early Anglos taught their children to work along with the adults in the fields. The women labored long hours to prepare meals and to keep clothes and houses clean in the hot dusty settlements. Many Anglos also plowed their own fields and herded their cattle while Mexicanos worked other portions of their land on shares. But these traditional American farmers and individualistic ranchers were also landlords and patrones in ways different from Midwestern farmers of this era. Cotton, vegetable, and big cattle production fed upon the large pool of cheap labor.

The complex relationship between the Anglo patrón and his Mexicano workers reflects the class and ethnic contradictions of this early society.[26] Many of the old Mexicanos and Anglos described their relationships with both great hatred and fondness. Most patrones developed relationships and exchanges with their workers to bind the two groups together. Many Mexicanos were given small privileges such as permission to have chickens, a garden plot, and some free grazing land for their milk cow. The patrones also arranged their credit and often took the workers to town. There were also times when some of the patrones took their workers to a doctor or a dentist, and times when the housewife gave the Mexicanos extra fruit from the orchard, a loaf of bread, or her children's old clothes. During celebrations the Mexicano would invite the patrón to his baile (dance) and sometimes he would come. Many Anglo children had Mexicano wet nurses, and most of the Anglos brought up on the ranchos played with the Mexicano children. They learned Spanish, and they ate tortillas and beans in the worker's house. The descriptions of old Mexicanos and Anglos show there was some degree of intimacy and certainly a great deal of social exchange between Anglos and Mexicanos on the ranchos.

For the many small favors and exchanges, the Mexicano often "lent" one or two of his children or even his wife to help the Anglo patrón prepare for his own celebrations. The Mexicano also often went in the patrón's place to serve the required five days of labor on the county roads. Other Mexicanos helped the Anglo wife unload her supplies, and they generally pooled their labor during critical harvesting times or during cattle sickness.

Although the housing conditions of the Mexicano were extremely bad, the credit harsh, and profits slim, there were always the small things from the patrón. It would be incorrect to describe the relations of Anglos and Mexicanos in the private world of the rancho as filled with conflict. When the Mexicano ventured out into the often hostile, impersonal, segrated towns, he undoubtedly encountered a good deal more mistreatment. If a Mexicano accepted his inequality and subordinate position on the rancho, there were many small redeeming aspects of this paternalistic relationship.

Yet it is also incorrect to characterize the paternalistic relationship of landlord to tenant as intimate and satisfying. The Mexicano laborers were, as one described it, "burros de la tierra" (donkeys of the land). He went on to say:

> I worked for my *patrón* for fifteen years. Then one day the *patrón* told me to leave. He didn't need me any more. You see he bought a tractor and it could do the work better than me. He was tired, too, of our chickens eating on his grain, and he thought our children should stay home from school and work. We weren't needed anymore, you see. So he got rid of us . . . . No, I do not think the *patrones* really liked us. Many Mexicanos believed that the *gringos* were being good to us, but I believe they used us like work animals. I know many *sembradores* who had to leave their place. We did not want to believe our *patrones* did not care. We had nothing else. We could not speak English. We had no land and no education. For many of us the *patrón* was our only hope. But we were never close, not truly *compañeros* (close companions). The *gringos* were only nice so we would work harder and stay with them until they no longer needed us. No, Mexicanos did not really like their *patrones*. And the *patrónes* did not really like us. We were not bonded together like *la familia*. If we could have left we would. If the *gringos* didn't need us, they would have sent us away.

The typical Mexicano sharecropper, like sharecroppers in other tenancy systems around the world, was immobile and poor. Most sharecroppers stayed on the same *tiro* for ten to fifteen years. A good *tiro* might gross from $500 to $700 a year, but after paying off advances and expenses there were usually no profits. Very few Mexicanos were able to become land-owners during this time. Nevertheless, sharecroppers usually perceived themselves as much better off than the landless wage laborers of the crews or the *vaqueros*. The wage laborers were paid less than a dollar a day when they worked. The *vaqueros* made a steady thirty dollars a month plus at least some form of minimal housing.

People in these small communities shopped at the community and ranch stores for their basic tools, canned goods, staples and work clothes. Both Anglos and Mexicanos generally bought the major portion of their supplies from the town stores, although this depended upon the availability of transportation and credit in the rural settlements. In six rancho settlements, the local store was run by the biggest rancher or farmer in the settlement. The bulk of the workers in the settlement worked for this patrón, and he gave them credit in his store. In other settlements with no stores the Mexicanos borrowed from the Anglo merchants in North Town, the county seat.

In the chattel mortgage records several North Town merchants had 100 to 150 names indebted to them. The same debtors often appeared for five to ten consecutive years. Judging from the population statistics for 1910 and the number of Spanish surnamed debtors approximately seventy-five percent of the Spanish surnamed households were indebted. By the 1920's the figure had decreased to approximately sixty percent. These are, of course, crude estimates, but they bear out the verbal descriptions of the laborers that economic conditions were very bad indeed.

The interest rates charged varied from zero to fifty percent. Apparently much of the credit for food supplies was advanced without usurious interest rates. Usually the sharecropper would get twenty-five to thirty dollars a month advances for food and supplies until their crops were harvested. The chattel mortgage records show they had to put up their *tiro*, livestock, and their cotton crop for the $150 to $200 advances. The merchants kept a record of the supplies taken and then gave the Mexicanos an accounting when they harvested their crop.

Many Mexicanos felt they were overcharged and cheated, but apparently they rarely contested the merchant, because they were fearful of losing their credit. Every town seemed to have some merchants who padded their figures and others who were scrupulously honest and highly respected. The landless Mexicano laborers often relied, however, on whichever merchant that their *patrón* preferred. In many cases the workers could only borrow credit if their *patrón* signed for them. The field hands and some of the *vaqueros* were in even greater need for such credit than the sharecroppers. In this system, when the landowners suffered from the unpredictable cotton and grain market, the tenants suffered even more. The harder the times, the tighter the credit knot squeezed.

By the 1920's some Mexicanos in the cotton-producing areas of these countries had been able to buy their own *tiro* and were farming on the quarters. Old owners and laborers estimated that perhaps fifteen to twenty-five percent of the sharecroppers in their settlements had advanced to *quartero* status. Many sharecroppers were also allowed to graze their own small cattle herds and their chickens on the *patrón*'s land. In North County several old sharecroppers claimed that Anglo *patrones* became disenchanted with the quartero system because the Mexicanos made too much money.[27] The Anglo patrones were reputed to respond by forbidding poultry and by charging rents for grazing use. In several other cases, people reported that the merchants cut off advanced credit in town around 1923. Many old-timers viewed these events as part of the general anti-Mexican feeling during and after the war. Many aliens were deported and Klan activity was on the upsurge in this region.

Despite such repressive activities, Mexicanos also shared in the boom years of the early 1920's. The chattel mortgage records show most Mexicanos using automobiles for security, and increasing numbers lived in the towns. But most of the life histories of old laborers, and the declining crop output in the census[28] suggest that any economic spurt in the early 1920's was short-lived. By the late 1920's, cotton and vegetable production spiraled downward due to soil exhaustion, the boll weevil, various fungi and molds and declining market prices. As the Depression approached, most rural Mexicanos were still landless and debt-ridden.

The Early Political System

The previously described set of economic activities and relationships between Anglos and Mexicanos formed the material and social base of early life in North County on the ranchos. To further understand the rancho way of life, one must understand how local Anglos administered the public institutions and public laws.

These early towns and settlements also had local government with the power to tax and to deliver services and settle disputes. Before describing the county and city governments and the early Anglo political leaders, the legal status of the Mexican immigrant must be clarified.

Perhaps the most important point of contact between the national government and these local governments has been the question of Mexican immigration. Several historians have begun to explore the relationship of regional agro-business lobbies to national policies on immigration.[29] The immigration policy towards Mexicans has been intimately related to the availability of oriental, black, and eastern European labor. Large California agro-business corporations, Midwestern sugar beet companies and Southwestern growers have consistently sought to retain their cheap Mexican labor pool. This has been particularly true when other sources of field labor were on the decline; consequently, federal immigration policies during the 1900 to 1930 period did not formally restrict Mexican labor in the manner that oriental (1884) and eastern European (1924) immigrants were restricted.[30] By 1917, the legal Mexican immigrant with papers was left out of the quota systems established. Much of the argument for this exception centered on the fact that Mexican labor was a transitory, temporary group that returned to its homeland. They would not cause a serious drag on the American economy, swell the welfare ranks of the cities, or mongrelize the white race.

Southwestern congressmen argued that restrictive policies should not be adopted because it might affect border relations and good will towards the Latin American countries. The important aspect of the federal government's role is not, however, their formal policy. The important point is how the United States has dealt with the informal flow of Mexican immigrants through coyotes (smugglers) and enganchadores (labor contractors) and mojados (wetbacks). Massive numbers of Mexicans were allowed to enter through various methods, and this labor force became "invisible" in the sense that they existed without any legal status. They had no papers, and they were not citizens. They therefore had no rights against labor exploitation and arbitrary deportation.

Many of these illegal immigrants settled in the hamlets and market towns and never acquired any kind of papers. These settlers were always subject to deportation. Old-timers frequently mention this as their main fear and preoccupation. Waves of anti-Mexican feelings occurred during World War I (the German-Mexican relationship) and the KKK activity in the twenties. This affected many of these first-generation immigrants. There was no way of estimating how many Mexicans were sent back between 1916 and 1926, but old-timers listed many names and said "everyone was afraid of this happening until later in the 1930's." The role of the federal government in these small communities was minimal. The government left this southern labor force to work out their own problems with local Rangers, Border Patrol and hostile Anglos.

This non-role of the federal government in protecting the rights of people is also paralleled in other areas. There were virtually no federal aid programs in health, housing, education and welfare. Nor were there any of the momentous decisions on voting and educational rights. The federal government was a distant, neutral factor in the lives of this first generation of Mexicano immigrants.

Likewise, the state government had few aid or welfare programs. They did little to encourage compulsory school laws, labor unions, and county health and welfare programs. Poll tax laws and "grandfather clauses" restricting voting were also preserved. The Mexicano was left to his own ingenuity and the local patrones for whom he labored. If the local patrones wanted to get rid of their Mexicano worker, they could. They could always invoke the legal sanction that he had no papers and he was here because of their goodness and willingness to overlook this fact. This remained a powerful form of control over any Mexicano, as long as even one person in his extended family was still in this status. Some old-timers contended that the problem of "papers" was the single most important "political tool that the gringos had."

Local government, prior to the early 1900's and the land boom, was almost exclusively provided by the county government. Regionally, there were only three city governments before this time. The county judge, the commissioner's court, the justices of the peace, and the sheriff and his constables provided law and order and various social and economic services to the people. The county officials were elected by a very small number of male voters through a system of county precincts. Elections were held yearly under the county's supervision in local polling places, often the settlement church or school.

Aside from holding and supervising the local, state and national elections, the most important functions of the county were to: 1) keep all records on land transactions, and vital statistics (marriage, birth, death); 2) arbitrate in cases when people violated the state laws governing property, personal safety, and community interests (community interest is a broad range of behaviors of citizens towards public buildings, public utilities, private welfare, property, and conduct in public places); 3) develop a system of bridges and roads linking the rural sectors of the county with the market town (each citizen was required to donate 5 days of free labor towards this end, and each precinct had a county road commissioner to help create and maintain the necessary roads); 4) provide social welfare payments to living ex-confederate soldiers and people declared extremely poor and indigent, as well as free burial services in a public county cemetery for destitute citizens; and 5) provide a rural school system based on large grants of state lands appropriated to each county. Initially, the county judge and later a special county superintendent, with the court of commissioner's approval, administered the schools. Each rural school also had a locally elected board that made basic decisions on personnel, building needs, and daily operating procedures.

In short, the county government was the center for all land records and the arbitrator of personal ownership, sales, mortgages and disputes; it also provided important rural services to the farmers, ranchers and their labor force such as roads, social welfare, and schooling. The county was the main governmental institution that helped sustain the relationship between the owners and the workers.

City governments in the early days were relatively less important to citizens than the county. The early South Texas city governments were either conducted by an elected council and a mayor, or an elected set of commissioners who hired a manager. Since cities also had the power to tax and to set legal boundaries, they provided basic services like water, streets, parks, lights, fuel for heating, fire protection, and a police force and municipal judge. A set of ordinances and license codes required people to minimize noise, animals, noxious smells, dirty and harmful enterprises, and hazardous use of fire arms, vehicles, foods, drink, and other human technologies and enterprises. The police and courts were responsible for punishing offenders and settling misunderstandings and disputes arising out of such activities. Unlike the county officials, the city officials were rarely paid more than token fees for meeting monthly to set ordinances and to manage the various police, inspectors, judges, tax collectors, bookkeepers, and maintenance men.

The boundary of the city government, of course, was restricted to the central market town and excluded all the local settlements. The bulk of the population only came under the city jurisdiction during shopping and social visits. Another limitation of the city was its considerably smaller tax base and lack of revenue to develop welfare projects or roads and streets. Although it dealt with many more people and the potential problems of large clusters of people, the city was a poor institution run with a make-shift leadership and a few underpaid technicians.

After the great agricultural boom and large out-migrations from the rancho settlements, the city government became somewhat more important. By the 1920's, North Town had developed their own water, ice, gas lighting and street systems.[31] Their services and therefore their influence over people's lives rapidly expanded. This control increased as more ordinances were passed to restrict noise and animals and types of industry and retail sales. As the higher level state administrative units passed progressively stricter standards for codes and licenses, the local city governments increasingly intervened in the lives of buyers and sellers.

Perhaps the most significant power difference between the county and the city was the scope and authority of the county judge and the county sheriff. As chief arbitrators and enforcers of state laws on a day-to-day basis, their potential control over people was much greater than any other government official. This became especially true because often these were virtually life-time positions. Election results from 1900-1974 showed that most county positions were rarely contested. One judge remained in office for thirty-two years, and several others served from twelve to twenty years. Sheriffs rotated much more frequently, apparently because of hazard and disfavor incurred with prominent local leaders. Nevertheless, a number of sheriffs served from ten to fifteen years.

It is important to understand what kind of people became local sheriffs and county judges. Judging from election results and the biographies of several local officials, the large ranchers and farmers in these areas rarely ran for any of the county positions. The county officials were generally either landless working class Anglos or small agricultural operators. Several growers explained it this way:

> I am too damn busy with my place to worry about what goes on up at the courthouse. I am not the kind of man who likes sitting around in meetings all day trying to decide how to spend a few dollars here and there. Don't get me wrong. I am interested in what those fellas do. I don't want them cheating or wasting my money, and I damn sure don't want the taxes to go up, and I want my roads graded. But I don't have time, and I do not want to be a boot-licker for every state senator or traveling congressman who comes wandering through here looking for votes, no sir!

This attitude was common among the big economic entrepreneurs and producers. They would rather have a set of local political entrepreneurs take care of the details while they grow and expand their businesses. A very representative view of county officials was:

> What kind of people have run the courthouse over the years? Well, some people might think they are a pretty smart lot, but if you check to see if most of them ever made it big in farming or business, you'll see that they are mostly nobodies. They never had what it takes to make it on their place, and most of them don't have no special education. So I don't see them as much of anything special. They don't know much and they ain't much. But most of them are all right. They are good ole' boys, good folks, friends and neighbors of mine.

That the county was primarily run by the non-influentials and small operators did not mean, however, that their ideal of low taxes and minimal government did not predominate. In early South Texas communities there was very little disagreement on the proper role of government. The less government, the better. The idea was to avoid restricting the growers and producers with burdensome taxes and duties, because their welfare was ultimately the welfare of everyone. The men who ran the county government generally controlled little of the land and labor, so they carved out their own niche in the local environment as the men who managed the infrastructure, the roads and schools and records, and who helped "order" the environment of the worker through the laws and schools and petty rewards.

The city governments were generally run by the most prominent businessmen in town. From 1900 to 1930 virtually no prominent ranchers or farmers were active in the North Town Council. Transportation was apparently very difficult until the 1920's, and most ranchers and farmers were just too isolated to get involved. Further, big producers who might have had time were not the kind of men who relished "sitting around jawing about putting a water main to someone's house." They had a great sense of their own importance in developing this land and in making a profit. They prized the ranching and farming way of life, and the ideal of "fighting the land and making something from it." Of course, "the bigger the profit, the sweeter the fight," exclaimed one old-timer. The creation of successful farms and ranches was a time consuming affair. For many there simply was not enough time to be civic and social-minded. The smaller operators generally laughed incredulously at the suggestion that they might have been interested in being a community leader. They were "nobodies," people who had all they could do to keep their land and handle their laborers.

By default, then, the local businessmen were the civic and political leaders. The early North Town business men took pride in explaining that they helped the community grow as much as the ranchers and farmers. They felt that their role was to manage the basic municipal and school services, "that nobody else would." Several spoke of how being a local official changed their lives. One remarked:

> I was a nobody before I got to be councilman, I had my little store and all I knew was selling my groceries. Everybody thought of me as good ole' _______. I guess they still did when I was councilman too, but I was more respected, people asked me for things, kinda looked up to me more, I think.

The storekeepers also emerged as the town leaders in other areas. Generally they and their wives, through voluntary organizations like the Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce, participated in virtually every community-wide activity. They were also generally leaders in the local churches. This is, of course, the pattern of small town America in the early 1920's and even today.

The most intriguing and important aspect of local government, however, was how people or groups of people used the legal powers of government in greatly expanded, informal ways. Government entities become a source of independent power for enterprising people seeking to control people and things. In North Town there were a number of individuals who could be called"political entrepreneurs." They were men of relatively limited personal power who developed what most people called a "political machine." One of these men was a county judge for thirty-four years, and the other a city manager/sheriff for twenty-six years. This pattern was typical of the region and the era. All the North Town "machines" occurred between 1916 and 1962. The present discussion will be a general description and characterization of the kinds of personalistic, political structures that controlled local government and the lives of the Mexicanos.[32] The discussion of these same political machines in Chapter three will focus more on why and how they declined and changed.

North County and Town had political machines that spanned the period from 1920 to 1950. Mr. Cameron, the city manager/sheriff ran the city from 1920 to 1948. He was the son of a small rancher and was perhaps the most colorful and ruthless of all the political entrepreneurs. He was a tall, handsome man who was a "good fighter" and a man who would "use the pistol he carried." He also had a penchant for women and was reputed to have frequently jailed Mexicano so he could sleep with their wives. He had several casas chicas (mistresses) in"Mexican Town." He spoke perfect, fluent Spanish and knew how to mix with Mexicanos in the cantinas. One Anglo contributor said proudly, "He could out-fight and out-drink the Meskins, and he got quite a little tail while he was at it, too." Indeed, if there is a stereotype of the rough, racist South Texas sheriff, Mr. Cameron appears to lend it a good deal of truth. Mr. Cameron appears to have had "charisma," i.e., a forceful, magnetic personality that commands a following. And if people, particularly Mexicanos, did not like his charisma, he had a badge and a gun, and a willingness to use them.

Although Mr. Cameron was not the mayor, he controlled the mayor and the city. The mayor under Mr. Cameron for twenty years was Mr. Dale, a local businessman who ran a small factory (fifty employees) that made cattle feed from cotton seeds. The mayor was older and preoccupied with his business and let the energetic Mr. Cameron run the city. Mr. Dale had been on the council since 1909 and had become one of the town's most prominent businessmen. During Mr. Cameron's regime, there were no city records kept, and many local residents were reluctant to discuss what he had done in more than general terms. His city clerk, however, and the son of the reform mayor who replaced him told how Mr. Cameron operated. Both Anglo and Mexicano old-timers described his treatment of people in

Mexican town.

Mr. Cameron apparently made his money by underreporting collections and by keeping a percentage of the taxes collected. Mr. Cameron also used the method of not sending tax notices to Mexicanos. He then used the sheriff's warrant for possessing and selling their property. He and a local rancher also had one of the first subdivisions in Mexican town, and a number of Mexican families were indebted to him for their houses. Mr. Cameron also arranged a money-making scheme with a local Mexicano carpenter and the county to bury dead Mexican indigents with county funds. There were apparently many fake Mexicans buried on county funds, which went to Mr. Cameron and his partners. There were apparently also payoffs from local _cantina_ owners and bootleggers for selling illegal whiskey. This was reported as a common practice between Anglo sheriffs and Mexicano _cantina_ owners. Other old-timers claimed that he got kick-backs on equipment contracts for the city, but there were no specific cases cited.

Compared to more notable South Texas political bosses, Mr. Cameron was a small-timer in terms of capital accumulation, and he ultimately drank and gambled himself into poverty. But Mr. Cameron, through various favors, intimidation, and small business deals developed a following in"Mexican Town." Anglos often said that "he ruled the Mexicans with an iron fist," which meant he frequently beat up drunks at the _cantinas_, slept with Mexican women, and inflicted several pistol whippings in public. Several Mexicanos claimed that he shot and killed at least four Mexicanos in cold-blood, and they furnished detailed accounts with names and places. It was not clear whether he actually unlawfully killed Mexicanos, but he apparently did shoot at least two Mexicanos. More important, however, than the veracity of these accounts is their function as folklore and epic tales of discrimination and Anglo brutality. The stories told in the barrio are that Mr. Cameron and several earlier sheriffs killed Mexicanos for no reason and with great joy. These stories of brutality are common and are passed on to the younger generations.

Mr. Cameron ruled through what was a common style among sheriffs, that is, to "go native" with the Mexicanos and drink and brawl in the cantinas. Mr. Cameron was feared, but he was also admired for his manliness and his brutality. He was as one old Mexicano put it, "muy hombre." He made the Mexicanos laugh and could enjoy the manly pursuits of drinking and fighting. He also gave them favors like extra jobs, and "breaks" when they broke the law as he defined it. Several Mexicanos told stories of how Mr. Cameron let them go for doing something illegal like trespass or speed or disturb the peace.

As in other cases of strong sheriffs, it was very apparent that one of the major powers a law officer has over uninformed people is to create "pseudo-events." In other words, a sheriff enhanced his power by making minor infractions seem major. He may even create situations where a citizen seems to have violated a law. In fact, the lawman exaggerates the infraction to threaten and intimidate the lawbreaker. Then in a moment of goodness and compassion, the sheriff says: (an actual reported incident)

> Well, Pablo, I know you got a wife and kids, and I'm gonna do you a favor this time. I'm gonna let you go, but you better remember that, and I don't want to see you in trouble again.

In this case, the "offender" was grateful, and the lawman has created a debt he can collect later, possibly in the form of a vote. This was a very common way that the rough, sometimes brutal Anglo law authorities were able to control the Mexicanos. They controlled them through being a "good ole boy" and drinking and socializing with them. They gave them favors as well as occasional beatings.

Men like Mr. Cameron fit well into the rough, lawless times in early South Texas. They were well adapted to the local way of life, and they served their purpose in keeping the "dirty, brawling, immoral" working man in line and out of trouble with the better class of citizens. In this case, the Mexicanos were the ignorant, easily manipulated group, and Spanish-surnames fill the courthouse and the sheriff's records. Even more important are all those unrecorded cases that were dismissed or handled informally. They often made the victimized Mexicano seem the beneficiary, which must have made the overall system seem more bearable and fair.

In this same town, while Mr. Cameron ran the city and ruled " Mexican Town" with an iron hand, Judge Paulson ran the county and the local Democratic political machine for thirty-four years from 1920 to 1954. Judge Paulson was a very different kind of man from Mr. Cameron. He was a quiet, well educated man whom many described as almost withdrawn. He was acknowledged as the man to know if you wanted to work for the county. He controlled the Anglo vote and the few Mexicanos who voted. Apparently, if one wanted to be a commissioner or official, it was with the judge's blessing. People liked the way he ran the county, and no one went against him. The commissioners always ran uncontested, and the typical pattern was for a given commissioner to stay in office ten or twelve years. One individual said to be particularly close to the judge, Mr. Mason, a small farmer, served for twenty-four years, and two others served longer than ten years, and several for four to six years. The commissioners' court was described as a relatively harmonious group that got along well and followed the judge and the general wishes of the big farmers and ranchers. The judge and his commission used the typical pattern of small favors such as grading roads, loaning dump trucks, and disbursing welfare payments, county burials, and small loans. The judge also gave "breaks" on cases such as disorderly conduct, wife beating, drunkenness, petty theft, and trespassing. He operated with a very "low profile" and was very successful at maintaining his position.

At different points in Judge Paulson's career, he was accused of kickbacks from machinery sales and of inefficiency, but no reform movement ever ousted him; and no one ever proved such charges.

One of the major ways he apparently used his position for capital accumulation was through his connection with a large absentee landowner. Mr. Paulson's brother was the ranch manager for a portion of a major Texas banking family's large ranch holdings. A number of Anglos and Mexicanos, one a former assistant to the manager and another a large rancher, described Judge Paulson as "in their back pocket." Apparently this man and several other large ranchers used to run thousands of cattle in and out of the county to avoid taxation. Since the tax collector was fully aware of this, the rich landowner was receiving preferential treatment from the county officials. The most important dimension of the relationship between the large landowner and the judge developed, however, when oil was discovered in the county. Nearly all of the oil discovered during the early thirties was drilled on the big absentee landowner's holdings. Consequently, the control of taxation became considerably more important.

Local tax records confirmed that even though the properties were producing thousands of barrels of oil, this particular family was still only paying a rate that appears to be only ten percent higher than other big landowners during that year.[33] It was difficult to know which taxable lands contained oil wells in order to compare the tax rates on these lands to those of other range lands. However, the small differences in the total taxes paid between these lands and other lands seems to indicate that the oil-rich ranch was under-valued for taxation. How much of a cut, if any, the judge was receiving is impossible to say. Several Anglos suggested that he probably benefitted more from inside knowledge on land and investment deals than from direct pay-offs. It would be difficult to prove that the judge personally acted illegally, but the tax rates remained low and the general public was deprived of extra public revenue. While keeping the tax rates low, he personally benefitted as a private entrepreneur. He enhanced his personal knowledge and connections through his private land title office, which was housed rent-free in the courthouse. In the strictest sense, nothing illegal had been done, but the frequent collaboration between the judge and prominent ranchers generally enhanced the ability of prominent men to control more land, money and people.

The above cases are not presented to condemn all public servants, or all Anglos. There were also stories collected about the hardworking, honest actions of local mayors, judges and sheriffs. Even Mexicanos, who generally received the mistreatment, expressed a liking for various historical figures. Often the old Mexicanos would explain, "those were just the way things were in the old days. You had to be pretty tough sometimes." There were city and county officials who doubtless never gained personally from their positions. Further, even though a relatively small number of people were re-elected for many years without opposition, the leadership did rotate to a degree. The leadership in the school board, the city, and the county were basically different groups of people. The city businessmen tended to run the city. The small farmers and ranchers and a few lawyers tended to run the county. The more active church and civic members not running the city or county tended to run the schools.

The type of person considered good at running the city water works and the daily affairs of streets, sewage and garbage differed from the type of person concerned about the morality of the children or the football team. "Businessmen just naturally like to run the city and know how to do it better." Others claimed that "church-going people, especially the Baptists, tend to worry more about what is going on at the schools." Such people were willing to "police the schools" from their unpaid, time consuming board position. Others simply want to get the football coach fired. In the county, the rural small time operators who needed a job or who had some aspirations to become politically active in the Democratic party often gravitated to the county jobs. Generally perhaps no more than forty or fifty Anglo males and their wives ran all the local institutions and various other local civic groups and clubs. Further, of those key leaders there were only a few powerful political entrepreneurs. Many of the early economic influentials in the rural areas generally exerted themselves through lesser men who ran the county, but the city and the school were of little interest until they began moving into the market towns.

The views of local residents and the actual distribution of leadership raise some interesting problems for characterizing local government as "elitist" or "undemocratic."[34] Of course, local leaders would stoutly deny that any small group or conspiring clique ran the town. First, there have been powerful individuals, but they would argue that such people were not usually the "real prominent" (high prestige) people in town. They would argue that people allowed them to run things as long as they didn't bother anyone. Second, there have also been a relatively small number of people running everything, but local people would rightly argue that certain people ran one thing and certain ones ran another. In fact, it was and still is often difficult to get anyone to take the thankless job of being a councilman or school board member. Local Anglos would deny charges that one group controlled everything, and it is important to consider this view as being accurate in some sense. In an organizational or administrative sense, there was rotation of leadership among a small number of families, most of whom were not the wealthy, influential ranchers.

More accurately, a variety of people, predominant from the "better class," all ran local institutions in a way that generally satisfied a very minimal conception of government. They kept taxes down, provided the minimum of services, and generally kept the peace. About the only time people became concerned about replacing a local official was when he became "too big for his britches." When a councilman or board member became unapproachable and arrogant, he had violated the powers allocated to him. Things only ran smoothly because he did not threaten the general conception of minimal local government. When he began to act too independently and "became disagreeable," pressures and opposition invariably developed. Generally, however, differences in local ideology were so minimal that it did not matter who ran things. Organizationally, then, there is enough rotation and consensus to create at least a feeling of a democratic, caretaker local government.

On the other hand, such a system of local government did not act as a strong advocate for poor people and particularly the Mexicanos. Nor did it control the rise of local political entrepreneurs who used the local government for personal enhancement. The indifferent or apathetic or frightened Anglo voters of the early days allowed such individuals to use and intimidate and humiliate many Mexicanos. From the Mexicano point of view, all Anglos were included in these political machines built on favors and brutality towards the Mexicanos. Mexicanos do not see the system of local government as democratic because functionally it was not. To them it was irrelevant if a number of Anglos ran different institutions, since the effect was still the same. The Mexicano was unable to manipulate or control these local institutions for his own self-improvement. This supposedly diverse set of Anglo leaders and their political entrepreneurs still operated in a very similar way toward the Mexicano.

The Mexicanos teach their children that their community was left with unpaved streets, fire hydrants for drinking water, dishonored wives, repossessed homes, and a continuing difference in wealth. That there may have been no single controlling clique or or all-powerful individual (although several of the cases cited cast doubt on that) did not make local institutions function any more "democratically." These local institutions only functioned as well "as the heart of the *gringo* let it," as one old Mexicano put it. The early economic and political conditions that Mexicanos faced in North Town were, then extremely harsh. To further describe life in early North Town, the next chapter will characterize how Anglos and Mexicanos privately felt about and publicly related to each other. Chapter two will also describe how the local educational and religious institutions transmitted beliefs that reinforced strict social segregation along ethnic lines.

Chapter 2

Cultural Institutions and Social Life in The *Rancho*

Life in the small North County settlements by modern standards, was not easy for either the Anglo patrones or their Mexicano laborers There were few amenities such as running water, electricity, radio/ television, and motor transportation. Most places had windmills or vacuum-suction pumps for drawing well water. Most food was canned, salted or smoked to stay preserved without refrigeration. Every household chore, cooking, washing, cleaning, and every field task, planting, cultivating, harvesting, was done without power-driven machinery. Old-timers described their life with a good deal of sentimentality. Life was physically harder for them, but much more satisfying, primarily because families and friendships were more intimate; and the local church and school were community centers.

Churches in the Rancho Settlements

The main social life of these tiny communities took place in the school and the church. They were the places where the community held the Christmas plays, the picnics, the box socials, and the weddings. The only organized church in most ranch settlements was Anglo. The churches were often interdenominational and served by traveling preachers. One week a Methodist preacher would hold service, and the next week a Baptist might preach. The early settlers on the rancho were not described as very pious or spiritual, but the churches were an important community institution. The Mexicanos of these settlements were excluded from these Anglo churches, but they developed their own churches in the town and home-centered religious practices.

In the early days, there was very little attempt by Anglo Protestants to develop Mexican missionary churches in Mexican town. However, small groups of local Mexicano Metodistas in North Town built and maintained their own churches in the early 1900's. The Mexicanos of North Town had also built their own Catholic parish by 1910. Before the Mexicanos had a town church, many priests came from Mexico. These traveling priests came to their houses, gave mass, and performed baptisms and marriages. On the rancho there were no churches, but the Mexicanos still practiced many religious celebrations. At Christmas time, a group of devoted women would perform las pastoderas, a ritual originating from las posadas of the Mexican rural villages. A few days before Christmas these women went from house to house singing about Jose and Maria's journey. During Easter, the families also celebrated the resurrection of Christ with special preparations and prayers.

One field worker described how religious beliefs blended with the love and respect that Mexicanos had for the land and people in these early communities:

> Man is born from the earth and each man is a temple of Jesus Christ. Cristo comes and gathers the bodies and souls of those who belong to the earth. every one of us, like each little plant, belongs to the earth. Today the world has changed a lot, there are many things that do not belong to the earth. That is why the world is so strange today.

Religion for the Mexicano on the rancho was primarily home-centered. Each house had its altar and prayer, and the rosary was faithfully said. Men were generally thought to be less involved, in religion than the women. Whenever possible, the children were taught the catechism, and religion played an important part in the life cycle celebrations of birth, baptism, marriage, and death.

The extent to which religious beliefs encouraged the Mexicano to accept his low social and economic position was difficult to determine. The church and early *padres* rarely acted as social advocates, and Christian beliefs did tend to encourage acceptance of suffering. Nevertheless, the idea of the fatalistic, religious Mexicanos has probably been greatly exaggerated. Religion in the early settlements was primarily a set of social practices and customs which enlivened the community life. Religion brought many friends and relatives together socially, but few Mexicanos described themselves or their communities, as deeply religious. Further, most old-timers located the cause of their troubles in the everyday realities of peonage, deportations, and brutal sheriffs. In short, religious beliefs did not seem to occupy the minds and lives of these early Mexicano settlers nearly as much as the material questions of survival.

Schools in the Rancho Settlements

Each settlement usually had a one-room country school, and the larger settlements had from four to six teachers and more than a hundred pupils. These rural schools were under the county judge and the county commissioners' court. From 1920 to 1940 the schools had their own county superintendent. The superintendent helped each school's board of local trustees find teachers, collect school taxes, get books and supplies, and pass bonds for school building improvements. They also kept records on the general operation of all the schools. The locally elected trustees handled the daily problems of maintenance, personnel, and provided whatever their teachers needed. The teachers were generally recruited from San Antonio and other urban areas and were certified by the state. Most teachers had an eighth grade education. The last year of grade school consisted of a special teacher training course. This included some training on discipline, record-keeping, the psychology of children, and philosophy of education.

The classroom routine of the one-room country school was quite different from modern, specialized schools. Recitation periods for each class were generally ten minutes long, and different subjects were covered on different days. A teacher was responsible for eight classes in five subjects; consequently, lessons were done quickly, and a good deal of the work was done independently by children in workbooks. Older children were responsible for helping the younger children learn to be quiet and to work independently. Education took on both a more familiar and independent nature than it does in modern schools. Most of the old-timers swore by the country schools and pointed out how successful many of their graduates were. They also generally felt that the long recesses and play, and the cooperative effort of putting on the school Christmas play and the Easter celebration were important country school experiences. Further, the communal nature of helping the teacher haul drinking water, fetch wood, and clean up their school also taught many important values.

These small schools were generally for the Anglo children. Approximately ninety percent of the schools in these counties were segregated.[1] The larger settlements generally had a Mexican school with an Anglo teacher. Mexicanos described the schools as smaller and more run-down than the Anglo schools, and Mexicano students rarely went beyond the first three grades. Nearly all of the Mexicano children dropped out after they learned enough English to write their names. Many of those living on the more distant farms and ranches never went to school. They were needed to work in the fields, and schooling was generally considered a luxury that they could not afford. There was apparently little push by the Mexicano parents to keep their children in school, and the Anglo patrones did not encourage Mexicanos to stay in school. They did not value giving their workers' children a better education. It served no useful purpose to be "an over educated cotton picker." There is no way of determining the drop-out rate or the quality of these schools, but by any standard, the county provided a very minimal form of public education during this period.

Conversely, most Anglo families tried very hard to keep their children in school. Only on rare occasions were the children kept at home to do farm work. Most of the small Anglo farmers realized that their children could improve through the proper educational credentials. Further, the more well-to-do ranch families often started their own ranch schools for their children. In the big ranching areas of these counties, the ranchers often hired a tutor, a young certified female teacher to live in their house and educate their children. Two reasons were given for this practice. First, the ranches were sometimes too far (three to six miles) for the children to walk to school, "particularly if they were girls." Second, they felt that a tutor would provide an education that would allow their children to compete in the local high school and even go to college. Having one's own teacher also gave a family a certain amount of prestige in the community. The county eventually helped ranchers finance part of the salary for these tutors. Some of the ranch schools got at least partial aid from the county superintendent by the early 1920's.

Also by the 1920's some of these county schools were beginning to consolidate with the town school. Others fought vigorously to maintain their school for several reasons. First, they knew that when the school was gone, their community would "dry up." Often the rural Anglos were reluctant to come to town to go to school. They feared the ridicule, and most felt they would remain farmers.

Second, some districts wanted rural schools so they could maintain greater control over their tax rates. The large ranchers from some settlements were already using private tutors, and by the 1920's they either lived in town or used private buses to send their children to the town schools. They retained their rural schools for the few Mexicanos who stayed in school and for the Anglos who could not afford tutors and private buses. The settlements of smaller Anglo farmers were also developing their own private busing system by this time so their children could attend a better junior high and/or high school. Gradually, the rural schools became a way of keeping the land taxes low and of providing the laborers a minimal introduction to English.

Another major reason why many towns people fought consolidation was the influx of Mexicans it might bring. A crusading superintendent, who sought to consolidate the rural North County schools, described the hostility towards her plans and attempts to improve the school system. The county officials were generally indifferent, the large ranchers were threatened, and the local businessmen were worried about the expense. She said:

> There were lots of reasons why folks didn't want to bother with the Mexicans; poor things, nobody wanted them. We started a school for them in Mexican town in the early 1900's. Lots of Anglos criticized us for wasting money, but most of them accepted it. The Mexicans wanted their own school, too. They didn't want to come to our side and we didn't want them, I guess.

An interesting feature of the segregated schools was the strict segregation of blacks from either Mexicano or Anglo schools. The ex-teacher and superintendent's daughter went on to explain this situation.

> The coloreds were really unwanted. The Mexicans didn't want them in their schools either. They had their own colored schools. There was one in the east end of the county where a few cottonpickers lived, and there was one in Mexican town where the rest lived. Then if the coloreds wanted to go to high school, the school district paid for them to go to Philip Wheatly colored school in San Antonio. They were given tuition, transportation and some living expenses. I guess several took advantage of this and went there and made it good. I think some went on their own, too, and boarded with their relatives and went to schools in Houston or in San Antonio for the Nigras.

Apparently the desire to keep blacks and whites segregated was so strong that schools were even willing to pay for sending the blacks to other communities.[2] Blacks, like Mexicanos, were generally given very limited, inferior "colored schools." Very few blacks or Mexicanos used schooling as a way of improving their socio-economic position. Schooling was a way of improving one's life only if non-white North Towners were able to attend city and private schools. Although there are few records that describe the quality of Mexican schools, the census illustrates dramatically the educational attainment of Mexicanos is still extremely low (4.5 years).[3] As a group, they simply were not included. The ideal of the democratic American common school for the masses did not really exist until settlement patterns and economic conditions and political changes in the thirties and forties began altering the old rancho system.

It is also important to understand the value orientations emphasized in these schools. There were many ways in which the schools transmitted the ideal of the rural Anglo way of life. One of the main ways was through training in agriculture and homemaking. The early school programs in agriculture were less developed than today, but they had a number of youth organizations for children such as FFA (Future Farmers of America), FHA (Future Homemakers of America), and the 4-H clubs. Such activities encouraged the youth to develop projects much like those of adults for fairs and stock shows. Students learned to be responsible persons through their projects. They kept records and prepared to compete and to make a profit.

Such programs placed a strong emphasis on character training, i.e., how to save money, work hard, win prizes through personal initiative, and how to act respectful, obedient, God-fearing, and loyal to community and country. A whole cluster of important traditional American values were transmitted in such programs. Not very many adults directly organized and carried out these youth programs, but most valued them for encouraging what they tried to teach their children at home. In the early South Texas communities and high schools, these were almost exclusively Anglo activities. The Mexicanos were the labor force, and they were not expected to learn the skills and values of the agricultural entrepreneur or community leader.

One other major way that local schools directly transmitted values related to community leadership and the agricultural way of life was through extra-curricular activities. Athletics and band programs were, and still are, important ways that the schools teach individualism, competition, Anglo cultural superiority, and the subordinate role of the Mexicano. In the early days, those few Mexicanos who were in the higher grades never participated in leadership positions or in extra-curricular activities. They were never elected to class offices or asked to join teams. Mexicanos accepted the fact that such activities were for Anglos only. It was not until the late thirties and the forties that more than a handful of Mexicanos were in high school, and they did not begin participating in extra-curricular activities until after World War II. Many local people generally viewed athletics and the band as "good places to learn both 'teamwork' and how to make something of yourself with your own hard work and effort."

Every week the youth of these small communities were given the opportunity to act out the fundamental values of hard work, cooperation and individualism. They did this against neighboring towns, which proved that the American way of life was best exemplified in their town. Their children, hence, they themselves, could kick and catch the ball better and play the instrument better because they worked harder. Several community leaders emphasized how much their experiences in school sports taught them about respect, responsibility, and leadership. The schools of the rancho period transmitted this message through their exclusion and segregation. When Mexicanos came to watch their town play other towns, they watched the Anglo children uphold their community honor and exemplify the local and national culture; they watched because they were the workers and followers and because the Anglos were the owners and leaders. In the early years, schooling was predominantly a segregated, exclusive institution, with the exception of some racial mixing in a small percentage of the rural schools.

Mexicano Recollections of Schooling

Older Mexicanos vividly recall the general lack of schooling and the attitudes of their parents, teachers and Anglo patrones. Most reported that their parents did not push them to go to school, and many old Mexicanos now resent the fact that they cannot read and write. One ninety-year-old woman described her feelings in the following way:

> Somebody came around to note us down to go to school, but we never did. They never came back to see if we were going to school. I guess nobody was interested in our education, not our parents, and not the school people for sure. Now we are ignorant. Nobody cared then but we care now, we suffer much for these things. Somebody did us wrong. The school people just wanted that money from the state. We did not know what they were doing then. They took our names and got the state money. We were stupid to let them. But our parents needed us in the fields, so we never went to school. We never learned to read and write.

The few who managed to go to school for two or three years generally did not remember school very positively. They described how teachers used to curse at them and maintain discipline in class by using a horse whip on the children. The different grades were grouped together in one room, thus, the teacher could never give much attention to anyone. Most old-timers described their feeling neglected in school. They could not understand what was being said, and the teacher had no time to explain. In retrospect, several Anglo teachers mentioned similar problems of neglect, language barriers, and overcrowding, but they did not recall cursing or horsewhipping children. Generally schools were not described as enjoyable places. The Mexicanos knew that they were in sub-standard, segregated schools and many carried this sense of inferiority with them throughout life.

Many older Mexicanas argued that the Anglo bosses did not really want to help Mexicano children go to school. Several reported various ways by which their *patrones* discouraged them from sending their children to school. If a *rancho* was far away from the bus route, the rancher, knowing the Mexicano family did not have a car, would do nothing to help them get to the bus route. A number of *patrones* also talked the parents out of sending their children to school, arguing that they did not need school learning to perform their work in the fields. Others pleaded with the parents to keep their children at home so the work would be done on time. Some Anglo *patrones* merely argued that schooling was useless for Mexicanos. Others were more harsh and threatened and criticized their workers openly. One *vaquero* interpreted the situation in these terms:

> Well, what really happened was that the Anglo boss likes a Mexicano who is not educated. An uneducated Mexicano feels inferior to the boss and lets himself be pushed around by the Anglo. What the Anglo could not stand is an educated Mexicano, a Mexicano who will rob the Anglo of his superiority image. That is why they always tried to keep us away from the schools.

The Mexicano perception of schooling is also closely related to the problem of language. Since the language at home was Spanish, Mexicano children who did not go to school seldom learned to speak or read and write English. Most of these old students deeply regretted knowing little English, which they considered crucial for escaping poverty and succeeding in society. The reasons given for not learning English in schools were generally the following: 1) the schools were for Mexicanos only, so peers would talk to each other in Spanish all the time, and 2) when the Mexicanos tried to speak English they made mistakes and the teachers would belittle them, which ended all efforts to speak English. One old woman had a theory that the Anglo also did not want the Mexicano to learn English because, she says, "they did not want us to become independent from them. If we knew English we would have better chances to find jobs outside."

Others reported that Anglos in those times often knew how to speak Spanish very well. They generally contended that this kept the older Mexicanos from learning English, and since the younger ones were not encouraged to stay in school, most Mexicanos during this era remained Spanish-speaking. Schooling generally had little effect upon the language competence of the Mexicano.

They did not become bilingual, and their inability to use English effectively was an important restriction upon improving their life chances. Girls were especially discouraged from attending schools, even when people started to move into town, and it was easier for children to walk to the school building. A fifty-year old woman said the following:

> My father said that I didn't need school at all. He learned how to read and write in the private classes of a Mexicana who lived in town. Then he dropped out and taught himself vocabulary by reading the Bible. But me, he said: 'No, she doesn't need to go to school. She is going to grow up and get married and have many *chamaquitos* (children). What does she need school for?

Today, this woman is attending evening classes and working to get her high school certificate.

Other Community Institutions and Agencies

During this period there were virtually no mass media (radio came in during the late 1920's), and Anglos ran all the local newspapers. They reported Anglo social events and news about their clubs, churches, and schools. In reading old local newspapers, one scarcely realizes that there was a Mexicano population.

One major way of transmitting the virtues of rural Anglo life was through agricultural fairs, rodeos, the local county agent, and the school-related FFA and FHA programs. The local county fairs and rodeos were showcase events for bringing people together and celebrating their way of life. Old-timers described the effort that many of the women expended to cook, sew, and preserve foods.

The men and young boys also worked hard to prepare their animals for showing in the contest and later for selling at the auction. In the early days there were very few rodeos, but there were celebrations where the men displayed their skills in horseback riding, roping, and bull throwing. These events generally had local folk music, dancing, and entertainers from outside the county. The carnival with all its rides and games-of-chance also set up shop at the county fairs.

Other community activities such as the local businessmen's clubs, the Lions and the Rotary, and the Chamber of Commerce, also transmitted community traditions and preserved the rural way of life. All of these types of activities were exclusively Anglo. Even in the early 1900's there were small Mexicano grocery and cantina (bars) owners, but none of them were asked to be in the Anglo Chamber of Commerce. When asked why, a prominent Mexicano businessman replied:

> The gringos didn't want us, we were nobodies, we didn't have much money, and we were Mexicans. Those businessmen's groups were just for the rich gringos.

It was not until the contemporary era that Mexicanos organized their own parallel organizations or were invited into the Anglo organizations.

Major social life and shopping for both Anglos and Mexicanos occurred during Saturday visits to the market town. The town occasionally hosted carnivals and the circus, and had ball teams organized into leagues. It was the place where one saw tent shows with live actors, medicine shows, and Chataquas with fiery lecturers and vaudeville actors. It was the place to gossip and swap stories, shop, and drink beer. Many of the Mexicanos also related to the market town in much the same way peasants do throughout the new developing countries. The women would bring their vegetables and tamales and, as one Mexicana described it, they would....

> Go downtown and sell our things under the mesquite trees where we set up our *puestecitos* (little stands). *La gente pobre* (the poor people) would leave the *ranchos* at dawn to come to town to buy their groceries. When they got there, the people would walk up and down the street looking at the displays in the windows of the stores. The father would go to get his haircut and then later in the afternoon the people went back to the *rancho*. *La gente* would come to the *crédito*. They would bring their maize, *frijoles*, their pigs, chickens to sell them in town. They would sell them to Mr. _______ who had a store and would use this money to buy things in town.

Unlike the Anglos, many of the Mexicanos emphasized the buying and selling of things, the experience of being in town. Generally, Anglos who came to town talked about the social life of the town which was open to and organized by them. Although the Mexicanos were not strictly excluded from these events, they often felt out of place. Few became involved in much of this early Anglo town social life. To the Mexicano the town was mainly the center of their life-blood, a place to get credit and the basic necessities to feed their large families and to make their shacks more liveable.

Slowly, the "Mexican Towns" grew more diverse and developed their own stores, market places, ball fields, and *cantinas*. In the late 1910's and early 1920's, the *Colonia* of North Town was a place where Mexicanos could more easily congregate and socialize in much the same way Anglos did in their part of town. Such developments, along with the advent of automobiles, greatly altered the extent and type of *rancho-colonia* exchanges. By the 1920's, the *colonias* had developed at least a dozen of their own restaurants and outdoor plazas for dancing, meeting, and socializing. To a degree such developments in the *colonia* further institutionalized the social segregation of this era into established territories.

Ethnic Territories and Social Spaces

Segregation between Anglos and Mexicanos has already been described in many institutional settings; but racial segregation must also be understood in a broader sense as a set of social rules and territories that defined all aspects of ethnic relations. Mexicanos were generally excluded from Anglo social life. They did not intermarry, and they generally had their own churches, schools, community organizations, and events. There were, as described, some aspects of the economic relationship which were social and personal. But the Mexicanos were generally supposed to stay in their own territories and show a proper degree of respect during social exchanges with Anglos. During these times there were very few private, personal spaces that a Mexicano could consider his own.

Old Mexicanos described many occasions where their private lives or space were invaded. An Anglo child could come to their house, eat tortillas, and dirty the floor when company was there, but a Mexicano child could never be in an Anglo house except upon request, and certainly not when the patrón entertained another guest. If a Mexicano worker or wife accidentally came into an Anglo house when the wife was partially dressed, they received a severe reprimand. But if a young Anglo male saw a Mexicana dressing in the early morning, it was merely a time of embarrassment and laughter. The Mexicano and his family often did not have a private living space of their own.

Nor did the Mexicano rancho community have a private space if Anglos chose to be a part of their celebrations and social life. It was appropriate for Anglos to come to Mexicano bars and to get drunk and beat up Mexicanos. It was also appropriate for them to eat Mexicano food in the little restaurants. They could go to the fiestas and bailes and dance and be merry, but no Mexicanos were allowed in the Anglo bars and restaurants. When they were, the Mexicanos had to eat in the kitchen and leave through the back door. Nor were Mexicanos generally invited to the weddings and celebrations of the Anglo. A great part of the Mexicano's private and public community life was open to the Anglo if he chose, but there was little reciprocity. Instead, the Mexicano knew where he was supposed to live, when he was supposed to be downtown, and where he could celebrate.

The Anglos in North Town built their stockyard on the Mexican side of town, and the ranchers from all parts of the county drove their cattle through it. The public buildings were also Anglo territories. Mexicans were not supposed to be"hanging around"the courthouse or the city hall. They were questioned, intimidated, and asked to leave if found in these places. There was even a certain time when the Mexicana housewives were supposed to be shopping downtown. Most of the old-timers remember that their children could not always accompany them shopping because the Anglo storekeepers became angry if the children touched anything. These women had the strong sense that they were only supposed to shop in the Anglo side of town on Saturdays, preferably during the early hours when Anglos were not shopping. They were made to feel that they should pick a time to spend their money that would not interfere with Anglo customers.

Apparently the children were particularly threatening to the Anglos. A number of Mexicanos described incidents in which groups of young Anglos kept their children from crossing the tracks to shop, play, or go to the intermediate school (on the Anglo side of town). Several methods were used. One was to throw stones at the Mexicano children. The other popular one was to use sling shots and shoot dried cow dung, rocks, and sticks. There were also times when groups of Anglo men beat up and dragged over-staying Mexicanos back to their side of town. One old-timer told how he had been watching some Anglos pitch horseshoe. He "accidentally laughed" at the misfortune of one of the players because the other Anglos were laughing. The Anglo reportedly turned to him and said,

> What the hell you laughin' at, meskin? How come you're over here anyway? It's already sundown, so you'd better git your ass on home to Mexican Town . . . . Fact, I think we ought to help this smart-ass chili-pepper, don't you,boys?

The Anglos apparently threw him in a wagon and hauled him across town where they then threw him out of his wagon at his family's doorstep.

This incident suggests that there was not only a very strictly defined territory for the Mexicanos, but also that they were never supposed to act like an Anglo would towards other Anglos. There were very explicit rules for proper etiquette towards Anglos. Some of the more obvious behaviors expected were a deferential body posture and respectful voice tone when speaking to them. One also used the best polite forms of speech he could muster in English or in Spanish. One laughed with Anglos but never at them. One never showed extreme anger or aggression towards an Anglo in public. Of course, the reverse of this was that Anglos could be informal with Mexicanos and use "tú" forms and "compadre" and "amigo" and shout "hey, cabrón" or "hey, chingado" (son of a bitch) in a joking, derogatory way. Anglos could slap Mexicanos on the back, joke with them at their expense, curse them out, all of the things that most people can do with relatively familiar and equal people. But a Mexicano had to be careful when to express his anger and his joy. If one considers etiquette or personal expression a form of private space, the Mexicano was severely restricted.

The Anglo controlled much of this social space and demanded a whole set of behaviors and expressions from the Mexicano that he did not have to practice. Such restrictions were especially recalled by the older Mexicanos, and they marvel at the younger generation's present freedom of personal expression. They now wonder why they let Anglos determine where they could go and how they could express themselves. There were, of course, Anglos who demanded far less of these behaviors and territorial exclusions than others. Several old Mexicanos described how you had to "read" the wishes of each Anglo you met in public. "Some let you alone, and some seemed to want you to bow down and kiss their feet." Reminiscing in a very forgiving mood, one elderly lady remarked:

> And I guess there were many others who just didn't pay much attention to what was going on. They didn't want to be bothered with those dirty Mexican kids, and they didn't want us in their houses, but they more or less left us alone. I guess they left things up to the sheriff and their kids. They kept us in line, anyway.

Segregation, although punctuated by personal relationships on the rancho was a very pervasive form of separation. There was an Anglo world and a Mexicano world, and the main place they met was in the dusty fields.

Cultural Values and Ethnic Beliefs

Description of economic, political and social relations in early North Town shows how Mexicanos and Anglos generally related, and how one ethnic group was able to control the other through a variety of means. But no pattern of ethnic relationships survives without a set of underlying beliefs that justify the relationships. In this particular case many of these general beliefs were powerful supports for the dominance of Anglos over Mexicanos. It is imperative, then, to understand Anglo and Mexicano perceptions of themselves and each other to understand why the inequities and oppressions of rancho life were accepted.

There have been many studies of American communities by historians, anthropologists, sociologists, novelists, and foreign observers on the American character.[4] Frequently, writers are either eulogizing or criticizing rural, small-town culture.[5] Less frequently, studies have been made in the Southern regions of the United States on the inequalities of racial segregation and its relationship to the American character. Likewise, there have been optimistic and pessimistic accounts of the American character to reform the inequality and brutality of racism.[6] Several trenchant critiques of studies on national character studies point up the difficulty of generalizing about the American character. Nevertheless, several core values do seem to underlie life in small-town America.

Writers on American culture often point out two core values that are inevitably contradictory. On one hand there is a strong emphasis on equality. All people are created equal, and all deserve equal rights under the laws of the land. Further, it follows from this egalitarian view that no particular class, no aristocracy should control the society. Men should appear equal in dress and manners, and they should be at least relatively equal in wealth, prestige, and power. Many writers on American character hold that, ideally, the American character has a strict view of equality among all people in their relationship to or over all things. The second major core value is the emphasis on individual achievement. A person proves himself and wins the riches of this earth and the heaven beyond through hard work and effort. From this ideal, of course, follows many potential inequalities. People are to be equal in some sense, but they should also strive to be the best, to accomplish and acquire as much as possible.

Perhaps the overriding theme in the reflections of older North Town Anglos was what these writers have called a sense of manifest destiny. All of the older Anglos strongly believed that this region of the United States would never have prospered and developed in the hands of the Mexican government and the Mexicans. The Mexicans were, as a government, and as a people, inferior. They lacked the know-how and entrepreneurial drive of the hardy Anglo American. The rich Mexicans were considered spoiled and disdainful of work. The poor Mexicans were peones who worked hard but were ignorant and subservient to their masters, the gods, and hence to the land they had to tame. Conversely, the rugged, hardworking Anglos who came to this area were independent and ingenious enough to master these dry lands and all the problems anyone or anything presented.

Many writers on the American character point out this rugged individualism and optimism is based on a peculiar blend of American capitalism and Protestantism. The Protestant Ethic is based on the beliefs that those who work hard are favored by God, and that those favored by God and work hard will be rewarded with material success on earth and spiritual salvation in heaven. In North Town none of the old-timers seemed terribly concerned with salvation, but they did indicate a strong Calvinistic orientation towards their "ordained" role in South Texas. One of the biggest farmers in the region put it this way:

> You wanna know why the whites in this area are so damn mad about this Raza Unida thing? It goes way back, you see, my father and a lot of other folks came here dirt poor. Nobody gave us nothin'. A lot of us came here with nothin' but the shirt on our backs, but we knew one thing. We knew that if we worked like hell and saved our money and used the brains that God gave us, we were going to make a go of it . . . The Mexicans? Naw, they was already here and couldn't make it. They don't have the get-up and go that whites have. They are good at taking orders from 'ol patrón,' but they can't think for themselves. A Mexican will give you a good days labor if you treat him right, but he ain't no manager and never will be. They just don't have the know-how to run something as complicated as a farm. Now, I'm not saying they are all dumb. Don't get me wrong. I'm no racist. I don't look down on the Mexicans. They are a good bunch, some of them, especially the older ones, they still have respect, but you gotta understand that the kind of peon class that come here didn't and never would win out over the American way of doing things.

This was a world view often encountered among the Anglo entrepreneurs. They have, and still do perceive themselves as representatives of a superior culture destined to make something out of this place, to learn how to tame the land. Many Anglos have this vague sense of early history and how their ancestors simply beat the Mexicans out as one would win a baseball game. The early Anglos beat them fair and square. They came and developed this place where the Mexicans had failed and they failed because they were peones from a culture inferior to the Anglo-Saxon culture. In the minds of present-day Anglos, old and young, this sense of history and pride in their way of life become rationales for their "superior position." From this pride in their culture and sense of superiority follow all the acts and attitudes that put the Mexicanos in a subordinate position.

The world is a competitive place in which one must work hard and must control life as a game to be played well and to be won. A man measures his morality or sense of honor by what he produces and what he can overcome. The point is not necessarily to harmonize with nature and other fellow men. The point is to prove your superiority, hence, worth as a person, through material accomplishment. A man who becomes landed and well-to-do and powerful is a man who"has paid the price" and he is a man to be respected. He is, in a vague sense, spiritually, or at least culturally, superior. It is not enough to be just a "good ole boy," a fellow who gets along. Sociability and neighborliness are also admired, but they are not proof of a man's moral superiority. Only winning the struggle against other producers and the elements really makes a man. It is hard to overestimate how pervasive this world view is and how thoroughly it is passed down to the young of North Town.

Along with this general sense of cultural superiority, many Anglos also expressed a number of other related beliefs about the inferiority of Mexicanos. First, many Anglos feel that Mexicanos are "dirty." One former teacher gave detailed description of several cases where Anglo teachers had to delouse the hair of Mexicano children in school. Second, Anglos often believe that Mexicanos, in spite of the fact that they are good workers, are basically lazy. Several Anglo farmers, ranchers, and businessmen told how they needed to constantly reiterate job descriptions even though their Mexican had worked on the same job for years. They also felt that it was hard to leave most Mexican-American workers alone on the job. The job would not get done properly. Third, many Anglos think Mexicanos are financially irresponsible. A number of older Anglos reasoned that they stupidly waste their money on parties and drinking and having a good time. This view greatly reinforces the notion that the Mexicano is really only suited for common labor.

Fourth, the Mexicano is not as intelligent as the Anglo. Mexicanos showed this by their failure and disinterest in school,by how poorly they spoke English, even after thirty years here, and by how they never got directions straight if they were the least bit complicated. One rancher said that it takes a long time to train them to do simple tasks, but once they were trained, they worked out very well. Fifth, Mexicanos are hot tempered by nature and often resort to physical violence. The frequent fights, described as stabbings and shootings, in the *cantinas*, and wife-beating were given as evidence of this. This kind of behavior makes them prone to disregard the law. Sixth, the Mexicanos are also viewed as as clannish. They refuse to learn English; they cling to Mexican customs. They are prone to run around in gangs, and they never fight as individuals. They also can't go anywhere or do anything on their own, without their families. Related to this, is the general feeling that they bring up their children in an undisciplined way, and the whole family spoils them rotten with too much attention. This kind of upbringing helps to make them clannish and afraid to "go it alone." Seventh, the Mexicanos are a "sexy" people prone to heavy breeding and excessively large families that become a burden on the community.

There are other Anglo beliefs about the Mexicano that support the Anglo's feelings of cultural superiority. It is important to understand that there exists a degree of diversity in Anglo perceptions of Mexicanos. Perhaps the major distinction that Anglos were able to make was between the better class of Mexicans and the *peón* class. Generally, most Anglos in this region are careful to not include the elite class of more "Spanish-type Mexicans" in this category. They are viewed as coming from a different, more superior culture than the Mexican *peón* who is mainly a poor Indian who worked for this Spaniard class. Many local Anglos have personally experienced contact with this more educated "Spanish *Mestizo*" class in the border towns and on their visits to old Mexico. Some

Anglos described the Indian peón class as the scum of Mexico, the rejects who sneak across the border. They reasoned that local Anglos, being from a better class of people, naturally do not want to associate with Mexican peones.

I was repeatedly asked, "would you, an educated professor, invite your field hands over to chat about world affairs?" Many Anglos argued that it was not natural for people to mix when they were on different educational and economic levels. Interestingly, then, Anglo attitudes towards the Mexicano seem based on a number of conceptions about their culture and customs, and on their class position. This, of course, is closely related to the notion of the Anglos' manifest destiny and desire to achieve and succeed. The Mexicans are a lower class, a group that can and should fit nicely into a subordinate, working class position. They were the bottom of an unequal, stratified American society run by the superior Anglo upper or "better" class. In this case, the notions of racial, cultural and class superiority are so intertwined that they comprise one belief system. All of these beliefs rationalize Anglo control of their workers and exploitation of the environment, and to a significant degree destroy the great American value of equality.

This is not to say that some notion of equality and fairness did not exist along with the pervasive emphasis on achievement. In the life struggle it was not necessary to destroy one's competitor and to dishonor him. There were also rules of etiquette and certain courtesies that tempered the competitive struggle for wealth, prestige and power. The wealthy of North Town often discussed how they tried to live inconspicuously and tried not to flaunt their wealth. Further, they generally felt that, to a degree, they had to share their wealth with the poor through charity and the sponsorship of various community events. But disguising one's wealth and giving to charity did not alter the basic inequalities, nor signify that these early North Town leaders were dedicated to the value of equality.

However, it would also be an exaggeration to characterize all North Town Anglos as hating and oppressing their labor force, even though they often held negative views of Mexicanos. No production system with such labor-intensive operations can survive if their labor is totally abused. Consequently, what many Anglos privately believed differed from what they publicly did to and with Mexicanos. As indicated in the description of social relations between the patrones and their workers, there was racial mixing and even intimacy between some patrones and laborers. The Anglos also spoke Spanish, and their children played together. Many Anglo children were brought up by the Mexican wet nurses, and many older Anglos remember going to the workers' shacks to eat those "delicious handmade tortillas." Force and cruelty were only necessary when the Mexicano refused to submit. In many respects perhaps the most powerful form of control became the degree to which Mexicanos accepted and internalized these Anglo beliefs.

And how did the early Mexicano settlers respond to such Anglo beliefs? How did they feel about themselves and their cultural traditions? Judging from the responses of many old-timers in North Town, the Mexicanos were, given the circumstances, a remarkably grateful, tolerant people. The older rural Mexicanos often could not say anything bad about their patrones. They described work and life as extraordinarily hard.

One elderly lady who spent all her life on the rancho said:

> Life and the suffering of today's Mexicano is just one teardrop of what we suffered on the ranchos. The young of today do not understand that, no matter how much we tell them. They do not understand how it was.

Yet those same persons would often not blame their patrones. They were still grateful and perhaps still fearful. In earlier days they learned to accept their fate as a poor laboring people. They learned to accept their inferior position and were grateful for the privileges of a few chickens, a small garden, and the credit that Anglo patrones got for them. This was enough to eat. Bad sheriffs and poor harvests came and went, and their lives went on. The Anglos were feared, often silently hated, but their power was also respected. In the expressions of many old Mexicanos one finds a great deal of what anthropologists call tolerance towards Anglos and Anglo culture. Several old-timers said, "We have our costumbres, (customs) and they have theirs." Meaning, they did not want to be like the Anglos, but they accepted their right to be different.

Many Mexicanos expressed a good deal of admiration for how smart and well-organized the Anglos were, how successful they were in business. The older Mexicanos believe themselves inferior to the Anglo in this sense. They accepted the basic Anglo belief in his chosen position to exploit the environment. Several commented that Mexicanos could never run the city and schools as well as the Anglos do. Mexicanos lacked the know-how. They also agreed with a notion that many Anglos have--that Mexicanos cannot be leaders because they do not allow their own people to succeed and rise. Older Mexicanos expressed this Anglo belief, saying:

> Mexicanos don't make good leaders. They are too envious of each other. They will never follow one of their own kind. They will criticize him and refuse to support him because they don't like another Mexicano to be higher.

In the early days, Mexicanos believed what Anglos thought about their own know-how and leadership abilities; consequently they set their sights lower. Most did not seek to compete directly with the Anglo for control of the environment. This was not, however, a lack of personal ambition, as many Anglos interpreted it, but a lack of belief in the potential of the Mexicano people and culture. The Mexicano laborer aspired to be a good provider for his family and a good neighbor, but he did not aspire to control other men or large portions of the land. If he could have his casita and perhaps a tiro or a good saddle and gun as well as a large family of healthy children, that was enough. Generally, he did not feel himself capable of more. He learned his lesson well from the Anglos and like other colonial peoples, the Mexicano accepted many of the colonizers' negative views as true.

Although the early Mexicano often believed that Anglos were in some ways superior to them, they did not live easily with these beliefs. Nearly all the old Mexicanos also expressed a deep, unwavering bitterness toward the Anglos. They told stories of how the *patrones*, although good to them, also treated them like animals. When they could no longer work, some *patrones* let their workers go and replaced them with a new family or with a tractor. The Mexicano hated the Anglo *patrones* for not reciprocating his labor with security in his old age. If the Anglo had truly been a *patrón* in the traditional sense, he would have understood that he had a responsibility to care for his worker as a father would. But in America the Mexican *peones* did not find a labor relationship identical to that on the feudal hacienda. The American *patrón*, accustomed to wage-labor relationships and fancying himself an independent farmer, was perhaps often unable to be the intimate *patrón* he pretended to be. The Mexicano often saw the Anglos as a cold, stingy, cruel people. They did not know how to live and enjoy life, to work their own fields and clean their own houses without the Mexicano and his family. These negative images are, of course, not shared by all Mexicanos, but such feelings were wide-spread among old North Towners.

Even more important, the Mexicanos were not rejecting their own culture by accepting Anglo entrepreneurial superiority. In fact, it was the Mexicano's sense of his own difference and cultural identity that probably made survival possible. In early Texas society, the Mexicano responded to the Anglos' sense of superiority and control of the lands and institutions by withdrawing into his own cultural enclaves and creating his own private, Mexicano world. He chose, and was forced to fall back upon, his close-knit family, his neighborhood, and his *colonia*. The traditional forms of social organization that the Mexicano brought with him served him well. He also fell back upon what anthropologists call "expressive culture," i.e., his own particular forms of dance and music and art and humor. The Mexicano ballads, the *baile*, (dances) the *Norteños* (folk songs), and the *chistes* (stories), can all be viewed as expressions of the joys and sufferings of this people.[7] They confronted a technologically superior culture with a rationale for exploiting the environment that was greater than their own, but they did not assimilate and adapt American ways; instead, they fell back, as many Anglos expressed it "to their own clannish ways. They didn't want to Americanize and be like us."

The Mexicanos, faced with their subordinate, segregated role in the society, could not Americanize and maintain any degree of dignity as a people. To Americanize in a cultural sense would have been to accept completely that a Mexicano and his ways were inferior. Most Mexicanos chose to accept that they were an inferior technological culture, and that they were inferior at exploiting the environment, but they chose to preserve their dignity as a people, and most rejected any implication that their way of self-expression and loving and dying was somehow inferior. They fell back on their culture and defined themselves as Mexicanos. This is a very fundamental point that many Anglos, even today, do not understand. The Mexicano chose to measure his humanity and his purpose in life by much more than his material achievement in controlling the land or other people.

But this retreat into traditional Mexicano culture has not preserved all the old ways. Contemporary Mexicanos have Anglicized, and they have retained aspects of their traditional culture. Mexican-Americans are bicultural, and they can to some degree believe and act appropriately in both Mexican and American settings. But in the early days, the Mexicano was so excluded and isolated from Anglos that he retained a good deal of his own traditional Mexican practices and customs in the early Mexicano ranchos and colonias.

Yet even though the general retreat into "Mexican Town" can be described as positive, the Mexicanos' life cannot be glorified. This was not a heroic retreat, merely a necessary one, and as their Norteños and Corridas (ballads) so eloquently express, many paid a heavy price. As in the case of any people under a colonial, racist society, they also learned to hate themselves and their Anglo oppressors. Only a social scientist standing seventy years distant from the past humiliations can say being Mexican was, ironically, their salvation. Several Mexicanos told of how hard it was to retain their self-respect in the early days. One elderly lady put it eloquently:

> Sometimes mi querido (my husband) would come home tired and angry. I would talk about the bolillos (Anglos) and how bad they were. He wondered if maybe we Mexicans were as bad as they said. I think my husband didn't think he was much good. He thought the bolillos were better than us, but he never said that. He couldn't say such a thing because he hated them too much. If he said that, he would not work as good. There was just too much . . . I don't know . . . too much work I guess. It wasn't something we talked about much, you know. I guess we didn't know how to or something. But I loved my husband. He was a good man.

There was no attempt in this study to collect psychological profiles or attitudinal measures, but the life histories of the old people express some of these contradictory feelings: the hate for the Anglos, for themselves, the frustration of not being able to understand it all, much less to change it. Again, as in the music of the Mexicano, there is this bitter-sweet stoic quality much like the country music of the black Americans. The rhythm and beat are different, but the feelings and the sufferings are the same. The grito perhaps symbolized this--the joyous, heartbreaking cry of a struggling man, a man in both pain and joy, a man who makes the best of the life he has.

The core values of Anglo-American achievement and entrepreneurial ability remained, then, largely uncontested in the early years. The Mexicano adapted to his subordinate, inferior position. The ordinary Anglo probably never questioned the morality or immorality of the suffering the economic and political system inflicted upon his workers. The Anglo could fall back upon his sense of cultural superiority and could see his small favors a sufficient kindness. There were also many other Anglo beliefs about Mexicanos that made this indifference possible. Indeed, the more Anglos could rationalize that Mexicanos were objects, work animals of a sort, the more, perhaps, they could live with the low wages and indignities they placed upon the Mexicanos to keep them as a working class. It is within this oppressive and hostile environment that the early Mexicano settlers began creating their own communities and falling back on their own resources and collective strength.

The Mexicano Family in the Rancho

Life on the ranchos for the Mexicano was rich and well developed, despite the lack of local institutions such as churches and schools and the heavy work and indebtedness. Oldtimers described the frequent bailes (dances) and celebrations. There were always weddings, baptisms, birthdays, and funerals to attend. People came together and played games of chance like jugares (cards) and walchers (washers). There were almost no public places, dance halls, plazas or respectable restaurants for holding celebrations; many such events took place in the tiny shacks and their backyards. Where the Mexicano workers lived in a cluster of houses, everyone was involved in all of the celebrations and shared the work, expenses and noise. Frequently, several families would ride in their wagon or walk several miles to neighboring settlements to celebrate with their family and compadres (godparents).

Thus, in spite of the isolation and impermanence, many old-timers emphasized that Mexicanos in those days were very close. They had to be in order to survive and to protect each other. Old-timers claimed that people did not fight and envy or mistrust each other, because they frequently needed a neighbor's help. They also needed the good will of other Mexicanos to help them get extra work, to get to town, and to share with expenses for celebrations. Families, compadres (godparents), and friends formed the only social insurance that the Mexicano had. There were very few cases of broken families, male desertion and unwed mothers. The rules for marriage, courtship, and parenthood were strict, and the social pressure elders put upon offenders was very strong. During this period the traditional forms of social organization and the core values defining kinship roles, marriage and respect for elders were largely intact.

Many of these original small settlements or clusters of workers' houses around the patrón, however, threw unrelated families together. The influx and turnover of workers was high, consequently these early settlements were often not as family-centered as later colonias in the market towns were. It was impossible to estimate how stable the population was, but some of the larger settlements apparently took on a more permanent character. In the surrounding settlements, as brother followed brother, and neighbor followed neighbor, many families became related to each other. But rancho life still took on a very temporary quality, and these early communities were often isolated and very small. Consequently, such economic and settlement conditions made the traditional extended family a crucial institution for survival and adaptation. If the head of a small nuclear family needed help in order to work his field, he could ask his cousins, uncles, and nephews. If the nuclear family consisted of two or three sons, then the boys were able to help their fathers with harvesting, planting, clearing the land, and caring for the animals. The family was a working economic unit where all the able-bodied members--regardless of sex--were needed and crucial.

The husband, as the main provider for the family, had little time for anything else but work. Fiestas (celebrations), movies, and visits were a very small part of the time he spent trying to bring food and supplies to the family. One eighty-year old man said:

> I came to this country with my uncles in 1909. I was only ten years old. Immediately I started to work in the field, earning about fifty cents a week, learning how to use the *arado* (plow) and how to plant the cotton and the *maíz* (corn). Later on, I started to work with horses and I liked that better. But I was still a *sembrador*. Then I got married and took my wife to live on the *rancho* where I worked in the *medias* (share cropping). I had a contract and a debt of credit with the Anglo. On Christmas Eve, as we were away celebrating at our parents' houses, somehow our *casita* caught fire, and we lost everything. That was very bad luck. Then that year, the *cosecha* (harvest) wasn't any good because it didn't rain, and I lost all the cotton I had planted. I couldn't pay my credit with the *patrón*, so I had to stay another year. My wife had got sick with the *susto* (illness by fright) caused by the burned house and the doctor was telling me I should move to another *rancho* or she would die of sorrow. But what could I do? I went on working one more year in that *rancho* and then was able to buy some horses and some tools, thus I became a *quartero*. I also worked as a *vaquero* in between planting time and harvest, when I had some free time. As a *vaquero*, I could work in several different *ranchos* and wasn't committed to anyone. It was good not to be committed to a rancher because then I could move on whenever I pleased. I also made some more money, secure money. It was very hard to make a living in those days. I was never sick, but I fell off my horse many times during my work as a *vaquero* and injured myself badly two or three times. But we made it somehow.

The wife of this particular man did not work with him in the fields, which was generally true for wives in the early settlement days. He wanted to work by himself and be able to say that he supported his family without outside help or his wife's labor. He also had told his wife that he liked her manners as a wife and, therefore, thought that she was a "true woman" of the house and should stay there. Only much later, when they moved into town, was she allowed to wash clothes for Anglo women. But even then she did it at her own home in a room built by her husband especially for that purpose. He did not want his children to work with him because he thought they should go to school. He explained his philosophy in the following way:

> I learned everything by myself and with some older people. I never had any escuela (schooling), but I am lírico (a natural poet). Well, then, all I knew how to do was field work and I didn't want that for my children. That is why I never allowed them to come with me when I was planting or harvesting, even though sometimes I could use some help.

His was a rare attitude since most boys did work with their fathers in the fields.

Life for women was spent mostly at home. Although many women did not work in the fields, women's work was very hard but essential for family functioning and survival. The day for a wife and mother on a ranch began at four a.m. in the morning. It is described by a very old woman who lived on a rancho from 1915, when her relatives came from Mexico, until 1932, when she and her husband moved into the colonia of North Town.

> I woke up first in the house and put some water to boil in a pan for the children's baths. Then I'd put some cold water in a big tub in the bedroom, plus the hot water until it was warm enough for the bath. I'd bathe all the children, one by one, and dress the smaller ones. By then my husband was also up. I'd prepare the breakfast for him and the children. He would leave by five or five-thirty in the morning. I'd then give something for the children to play with and be busy while I prepared the masa (dough) for the tortillas. My older daughters helped with grinding the maíz in the metate (stone bowl). That would take me about an hour or so to do. Then I'd have to start preparing lunch for my husband; if he was working in a land near the house, he would come home for lunch at about noon. He'd stay home until two or three in the afternoon because the sun was too hot at that time for him to work. Well, I was always busy at the house with one thing or the other. When I had some free time I'd go over to my comadre's house by foot and visit with them for a while or then just sit and work in my costura, knitting and embroidering.

She had little time for relaxation. Her sources of distraction were the few moments of conversation with her peers, and her free time was used in doing some more work like knitting and embroidering. She was responsible for organizing home activities, instructing her children in house chores, nursing the sick and using the family resources (food and clothes) efficently. A proud woman was sure to have her little house always kept tidy and spotless, her children always dressed in clean, though old and patched up, garments. To have the house in slight disarray or the children going around messy was to be considered a dejada, a lazy woman. The self-pride of the poor, hard-working Mexicanos often depended upon the fact that they could be as clean and well-dressed as possible.

Since male/female roles were understood and accepted, there was generally little conflict. If there was resentment from one spouse, it was not openly expressed. Both men and women understood the importance of their tasks for the family unity and survival. A woman was supposed to obey her husband, to abide by what he said. If he said "don't go out," she did not go out; not to follow his orders was to show a lack of cariño, i.e., that she did not really care for him. The relationship between husband and wife was generally a paternalistic one, but also one of mutual respect and support. Although he was considered the chief, she also held a great deal of authority over the children and family affairs. In some families, the woman was given part of the decision-making power. One woman describes the relationship between her parents, back in 1910, while they lived at the rancho:

> My mother mandaba en la casa (was the boss in the house) but decisions were made by both her and my father. If my father wanted to sell all the maiz or a cow, he first consulted with my mother. Of course, not all the couples around there were the same. There were some husbands who would lock the food in a compartment that only they could open. When the wife needed some food she'd have to ask him to open the compartment. A woman's life was very hard: we had little freedom and a lot of work. We had no horses, for instance, so we depended on the men for transportation. But it wasn't like that with my mama and papa: they were good to each other.

Most women learned and accepted that the man was the unquestioned chief of the home. Usually, women attained their social identity from their men; they were always known in the community as some man's sister, daughter, wife or mother. The older Mexicanas also wanted a man's strong hand to share the household responsibilities. They learned to think of men as stronger and more able to defend the family against outside dangers.

Many of these women do not remember the *rancho* days as particularly unhappy times. They talked a great deal about physical hardships, but what dominated their remembrances was family life. They lived in close contact with their families, surrounded by them every day, all day. Even the shabbiness of a worker's shack could not take away the feelings of love and security brought about by such close family ties. A strong willed Senora with eight children tells her story:

> *Yo nunca sufrí en la casa de mis padres* (I never suffered at my parents' home) *porque mi padrecito santo era tan bueno y mi mamá también.* (because my saintly father was so good and my mother too). My father never gave my mother any *disgusto* (sorrow), never got drunk, only worked hard for all of us. We had the little house, the mules and many other animals in the ranch, like chickens, turkeys, and pigs. When we needed butter, the whole family would get together to make butter from the pig's fat. My mother used the pig's blood to make a delicious meal. We also had a lot of eggs to eat. My mother liked to give the eggs away to relatives and friends, never selling them.

Although the woman was generally supposed to abide by the husband's words and be *humilde* (humble) towards him, it was obvious that the mother always held a strong, central role in the household. As an old Mexicana explained:

> La mamá era todo (The mother was everything.) Without the mother there would be no family. If the mother dies, the family is disrupted: each child goes to a different household, to live with an uncle or with the grandparents or godparents. The family's unity is broken without la mamá.

The family was the main socializing agency, since schools were rare and church remote. The father instructed the male children, and with the mother he shared in teaching etiquette and social ideals; he taught the sons how to plant, plow, and harvest like a sembrador. A father who was a vaquero also taught his male children, traditionally the older ones, how to ride the horses. His teachings were complete and filled with the wisdom that he had obtained in his life work. An old man recalled how his father taught him about horses:

> When I was about nine years old, my father would bring a horse to the front of the house and tell me to get on it and ride it. He did this every day, and as time passed, I improved my riding gradually until I could run the horse. He always told me that I had to think like the horse and know what he was going to do as you rode him.

Fathers also instructed their sons on how to behave as a husband and father, not only by giving the example but by exhorting them to follow certain rules of conduct towards the family. A woman told how her father instructed her brothers:

> He used to tell them that when they got married it was their obligation to take good care of their wives and children. If they ran around with other women and neglected their wives and for that reason their wives got sick and died, they should not come to my father for aid; they would have to find a solution for themselves because my father would not help dishonorable sons.

Daughters received their training primarily from their mothers. They were encouraged to stay home and do the domestic chores that were considered strictly female work. The boys would either follow the father to work with him in the field or go to school. Many girls went to the small rural schools also but would soon drop out and stay home. Girls were instructed by their mothers in sewing, knitting, embroidering, cooking, washing, ironing, cleaning the house. That was considered an absolute necessity, if the girls were to become good wives and mothers. One woman remembers that it was her father who taught all the girls in their family how to behave towards their future husbands.

> My papa used to sit with us in front of the house, after he came from work and talk to us about how to be a good wife. It was like a school. He'd say we always would have to abide to what our husbands say, and accept his orders and decisions, that the husband was el jefe (the chief). We had to have quiet manners and not argue with him. Also, we should comb our hair, put on a clean dress and wash our face in order to wait for our husbands to come home. 'A man,' he used to say, 'doesn't like to find a wife in bad shape. Your hair doesn't have to be dirty, it should be kept clean and neat. Your dress may be all patched up, but it must be clean. Also your face doesn't have to have make-up on, as long as it is clean and not greasy.

After women cooked huge pots of food, washed clothes, changed diapers, and mopped the dusty floor, they still had to worry about looking nice for the man coming home from work. This woman reports that she always tried to look nice; further, she never saw her mother arguing with her father, and claimed that she never argued with her own husband. She was married fifty years to the same man and nobody ever saw or heard them quarreling. Such reflections were common among the older women.

In the training of children, physical punishment had its place, but it was not used often. When physical force was necessary to make a child obey or to punish a misdeed, the punishment was usually administered by the father. The mother was supposed to be softer in dealing with her children, and most women were proud to say that their children never required strong punishment. Apparently, they seldom misbehaved or talked back to the parents. Respect for elders was greatly emphasized within the family. Another reason that mothers were not harsh with their children is that women bear the children and therefore suffer with them. Women contended that they felt the suffering of their children more than the men. They reasoned that men, since they did not carry the child within their bodies, were unable to actually feel the suffering of a child. Consequently, men found it easier to castigate their children and cause them pain.

While children were jóvenes (single) they were supposed to live in the parents' home, especially the daughters. An unmarried daughter could live with a married sister or brother if her parents died, but she could never live alone or with unrelated people. Children had to be watched and cared for by the parents. Children also had to obey and follow parental advice and orders. The authority of parents could, however, be transferred to or sometimes shared with the eldest son and daughter. For example, an older brother could and often did take his younger brothers to the field where he taught them to work. An older sister often took care of the children, cooked, and washed for the older brothers in the mother's absence. The elder brother, like the father, ultimately had greater authority and responsibility.

Women traditionally also had less freedom of movement than men. Daughters were much more closely supervised than sons. Boys could go out in groups to the nearest towns and have a good time. They could ride horses and go to the movies alone. Girls could rarely go out of the home without their mothers or other trusted companions. Some women reported that they had been allowed to go out with other girls their age on a picnic. However, such outings were only possible with companions approved by their father and mother. If a girl asked why she was not allowed to do what her brothers could do, the answer would always be:

> Men are strong and they know how to defend themselves. Not women. If you are out without your *mamá* or your *papá* or your older brothers, a man can come and steal you, disgracing you forever.

When silent movies were being shown in the town nearby, a mother and her daughters or *comadres* (godmothers) were allowed to go. It was not uncommon to see a group of women driving a mule-drawn wagon to the Saturday movies. They had to go in the afternoon in order to be back home before dark. Some old women are horrified when they realize that young people today come back from the movies after midnight, "when it is already the next day." Fathers would also take their whole family to enjoy a movie together on a Saturday afternoon. They could not go to the movies on Sunday because it was a church day, and they had to be home early to rest for work on Monday.

The men on the ranchos usually went to town or went drinking with their close friends. However, the family was central to their lives, and most men were not known to neglect their families for friends or for other women. Women also formed friendships among themselves, and many reported being close with relatives, comadres, and women on nearby ranches. These friendships were crucial in times of need. When a woman was to give birth, not only her mother, but also her mother-in-law and other females came to her aid. A woman who lived in a settlement town said:

> You didn't have to ask for anyone's help. They would just come to you. Whenever my mother had a child, the house would be filled with other women who would take care of us children, cook for her, bathe her and the baby, help her in every possible way.

Even though the houses were far apart, they would take time to visit with each other as frequently as possible. Often, they had no transportation, or only a wagon drawn by mules; thus friends and relatives might walk several miles to see how a comadre was doing. If a comadre lived nearby and had not shown up for more than two days, one would go visiting to see whether she was sick and needed help. Comadres and female relatives also had a great deal of authority over each other's children. Any woman could care for the children of a related woman and expect to be obeyed and respected by them, as her own children would. Conversely, she would be expected to treat her neighbor's children as she would her own. The women emphasized how important and wide-spread these practices were. The pattern of visiting was important for maintenance of not only familial ties but also the solidarity of the Mexicano people. Living in a foreign, segregated society, they found comfort and aid from their own group and shared their children and their friendship.

Visits usually involved the whole family, and the traveling to another rancho involved a good part of the day going back and forth.

> Mi comadre Rosita often visited me. She was frequently coming to our house some week-ends. She'd arrive on a Saturday afternoon, coming by wagon, with everyone: all the children plus the couple. They'd stay until Sunday morning and then head back home. Her children greatly enjoyed the columpios (swings) that my husband had hung from the trees for our children. All our children played well together. The house was small, but there was room for everyone to stay overnight. The floors would be covered with pura muchachada (many young people). Of course, there was always enough food. Who feeds one, feeds ten.

People who lived in settlement towns, as well as the ones in the ranchos also enjoyed having fiestas that took place in the backyard of a casita or in the "Mexican School." There was guitar and accordion music played by local people. They danced on the bare earth, under the stars, until late in the evening. Sometimes, but not frequently, Anglo patrones would join a partying group of Mexicanos. Nevertheless, those occasions were for enjoying themselves as Mexicanos--with their music, their language, gritos (cries), food and customs. As previously described, people also enjoyed many games of cards and washers.

> There was a rancho famous for los juegos (games). People would walk a long distance to go there and would stay for a few days. They were bienvenidos (welcome) and a place to sleep was offered to them. In those days la gente era muy amistosa. (people were very friendly).

Marriage was considered very important for both sexes. One simply had to get married and form another family unit in the rancho economy. In the ranchos, many marriages took place after a long, ritualized courtship that was closely supervised by the future bride's parents and older brothers. The latter were supposed to protect their sister's honor and would take great pains to supervise her. Some women resented such brotherly supervision very much and felt that the brothers interfered in their personal affairs too often. Such resentment was enhanced by the fact that the sisters had very little control over their brothers' romantic lives and other affairs. During courtship the future groom and bride would seldom see each other or talk to each other for any great length of time.

The ancient custom for parents to arrange the marriages of their children was no longer practiced. Young people were already making their own choice, but it had to be acceptable to the parents. In some cases, when the young man lived far or wanted to court his girlfriend secretly, courtship would take place through the mail. He would send her written notes or spoken messages through her relatives (usually female), and she could answer in the same manner. He could only see her at her home, under family surveillance, and usually after a formal engagement. In that way, women were protected from any "evil man" or from someone who just wanted to "play with their feelings."

It was reported by some that the ideal age for a girl to marry was around eighteen. Parents did not allow their daughter to marry earlier, fearing that they were unprepared for wifely duties. One mother of six said:

> At fifteen one is not mature enough for marriage. Besides, there is a lot more to learn from your parents at home. You shouldn't go into marriage without being prepared. That's why parents wanted you to wait until you were eighteen in order to get married.

There is some variance in that respect. While some women report that if a girl wanted to get married at fifteen, her parents would not allow it, other women felt that they were "marrying old" at eighteen and nineteen.

Weddings were celebrated with a good deal of festivities.

A typical wedding started at ten in the morning and went until the next morning. A seventy-year old woman described her wedding.

> In my wedding, the orchestra was supposed to stay only until midnight because it was freezing cold. It was in January of 1925. But the players were my husband's friends so they decided to stay until two in the morning, by then the grounds were so icy that nobody could go home. So we danced and had a good time until ten the next morning.

Thus, the wedding party, like other family celebrations such as baptisms or even funerals, brought together many families, friends, comadres and compadres from ranches all around; it was a grand affair, a genuine opportunity for celebration. People said that they had to go to the wedding in order "to pay their humanidad" (being human and friendly) to the new couple and their parents.

Marriage had to be stable and harmonious because of its important economic and social function. The nuclear family as a labor unit was essential for survival. But for many it was also based on the sacredness of life, as an old woman explained:

> A person is a regalo del cielo (a gift from above). You have to live a good life in order to be worthy of this gift. You have to do your best not to spoil that which was given to you by God and your parents: your own life. So you have to do a good marriage.

A big family was considered a blessing and was welcome by the parents. Women expected to bear many children. Birth control practices were largely unknown, and there was a great deal of ignorance among females about sexual reproduction. Women who wanted to stop having children had to make use of inefficient folk methods. Most women, however, accepted their fate as bearers of many children, learning to enjoy and cherish them. In fact, women who had only two or three children felt slightly deprived. Such women report enjoying a visit to another woman who had many children. They enjoyed the noise and movement of a house "filled with children."

In dealing with racism, economic exploitation, and the isolated rancho life, the Mexican family and community were rather successful in surviving materially and spiritually. They took what was allotted them and tried to make the best of it. This is reflected in statements from old-timers who like to say that "life then wasn't as complicated or hard as life is today." Most families tried to supplement their meager income by planting a little garden of beans and potatoes and raised chickens or turkeys in order to get meat and eggs. Moreover, some women say that although work was harder and the future uncertain, everything was cheaper and many report never lacking anything that was essential. One older woman explained:

> You had to work very hard, but at least you didn't have to worry about paying bills, such as light or water. We had no electricity and water was brought from a well. You also didn't have school expenses, since we ate fresh, good food and had lots of natural exercise. I don't remember any of us children ever needing to go to a doctor.

Life in the rancho was often insecure, and being on the margin of the white society often undermined the Mexicano's self-worth and confidence in his own culture. But imbedded in the suffering was the feeling that they were doing the best they could, that everyone was helping. Life was taken with stoicism, as something one had to endure, but also to enjoy as much as one could. They knew that lack of rain would hinder the harvest, that tempests would destroy the plants; life was often a matter of luck. It often seemed that "you either work yourself to death or you starve to death." There was no help from the outside, no federal programs, no social workers. The family was left alone, and they gathered around each other for strength, endurance and a reason to live. They did not expect help from the outside and were often suspicious of unsolicited aid or advice. They tried to help each member of the family when possible. The rest of the world was strange and unfamiliar; therefore, it was kept at a distance.

A SUMMING UP: THE ORGANIZATION AND POWER OF THE COMPETING ETHNIC GROUPS

It is important to conclude this discussion of Mexicano and Anglo relations in the rancho era with some assessment of how organized and unified each group was. The description of life during this era may have left some readers with the idea that a powerful, well-organized Anglo group consciously and willfully dominated and exploited the Mexicanos. In this superior-subordinate relationship the Mexicanos would be weak, disorganized and passively accepting of Anglo domination. Neither of these extreme characterizations was intended. The relative power of each group, and their forms of control and exploitation were varied and complex.

To a significant degree the North Town Anglos were a dominant group that controlled the local institutions and their Mexican laborers. As a group, however, they were far from homogeneous. Socially and culturally Anglos were a hodge-podge of white ethnic groups; most of whom came to this frontier region very poor and very anxious to improve themselves. Originally, these small ranchers and farmers came in the wake of the Mexican-American War that fostered Anglo exploitation of Mexican lands and settlements. Later, big urban capital, absentee landlords, and a flock of land speculators further developed the area. Many of these settlers came from different Anglo American ethnic groups in the midwest, East Texas, and particularly the older German hill country communities of Central Texas. Such settlers were often small farmers who were being pushed from exhausted Southern cotton lands or from more expensive midwestern lands. In their view, this South Texas region represented something of a last frontier of good, cheap farmland.

The basis of Anglo social organization in North Town was kinship. The early Anglo families were also large, and many of the ranches/farms were father/son or brother/brother partnerships. Nearly all of a person's social life was organized around family celebrations, and Anglos stressed the closeness and solidarity of early families. Frequently, the small hamlets consisted of several extended families, usually two generations deep, centered around the family head and his brothers and sisters. These ranching/farming families stressed their independence and privacy, and community-wide organizations were minimal. In the growing market center of North Town there existed a considerably more complex Anglo community which contained the social differences so often described in small town America.

There were many religious, occupational, educational, and class differences that separated Anglos from each other. By any measure of social organization, the Anglos reflect considerable diversity for a small rural town. Further, in the management of the economy and the town, there was a degree of inter-Anglo competition. The market system for cotton, vegetables, and cattle was erratic at best, and in spite of the occasional labor exchanges and church fellowship, Anglos were forced to compete with each other. This was especially true in the fresh vegetable market. In one county a number of growers attributed the downfall of the spinach market in the early twenties to the price-cutting tactics of an organization of independent growers. Further, small cotton growers and small ranchers bitterly complained about how big ranchers, growers, shippers, and brokers were constantly taking advantage of their tenuous position. There were also cases of Anglo bankers and Anglo merchants repossessing Anglo lands. Indeed, the big economic producers, as in any other setting, often gave no quarter to the small producers. The squeeze was always on, it seemed.

Moreover, Anglos were far from united behind one political machine or one patrón. Old-timers revealed a very strong streak of individualism and a populist contempt for all politicians and "big shots." They were critical of the"political entrepreneurs" that helped themselves. These feelings and conflicts were reflected in the periodic factionalism in local government and school elections. The early Anglo leaders remember that during the early twenties, and the late thirties, Anglos were pitted against Anglos. Reformers wanted to get rid of "that bunch running city hall." There were occasionally "hot" county and school board elections. In most cases, it involved one Anglo angry over a particular issue, e.g., how his road was graded or who coached the football team. A person usually ran against an incumbent guilty of not grading his road. In anger he mobilized his kinship group and friends and whoever owed him a favor. These were not pervasive forms of factionalism that had long histories or were motivated by some form of blood vengeance. Nevertheless, such splits did periodically occur, and they, at least temporarily, affected the solidarity of the Anglo community.

Anglos were also divided to some degree by perceived class and status differences. Several old-timers described the differences between old families (original settlers) and new families. You were "nobody" socially unless you were one of the original families. Further, being a rancher was definitely better than being a dirt farmer. Farmers were simple, honest people who worked hard, but they lacked social graces, clothes, and manners. Ranchers tended to see themselves as rugged and better dressed, and as better fighters and lovers. They were "fancier," went to the cities more often, and knew more about the outside world. The businessmen tended to consider themselves more modern and well-informed. Those who were more prosperous were the first to have automobiles, radios, and other modern conveniences.

As in many other small American communities, all of these status differences were also related to the churches. In North Town the Methodists tended to be the center of the civic and political leadership group, the older, better families. The same pattern of Methodist prominence tended to be true in Aztlán City, but in other surrounding towns the Baptists tended to be the most prominent church. As the early civic leaders suggested, the church that became socially prominent was the one that the original ranching and business families attended. Once certain families established their prominence in the community, other aspiring newcomers tended to join the churches with prominent members.

To a degree, then, the churches reflected and reinforced class differences. Churches also became the basis of stereotyping among Anglos. Several civic leaders characterized the Baptists as "teetotalers and Bible thumpers." Conversely, the Methodists are thought of and think of themselves as less fundamentalist and conservative, or "religious" as other put it. In the Anglo rancho settlements religious and class differences appeared to be minimal.

Life in North Town was apparently filled with more factions, status envy, stereotyping and class differences. Moreover, there were always the ubiquitous effects of economic competition.

In spite of such differences and sources of disunity, most old Anglos described life as reasonably peaceful and harmonious. The Anglos of early North Town all participated in the community social life, and generally cooperated to make their schools, churches, and community grow and prosper. They shared a desire to exploit the lands and make a good living. To this end they sometimes shared their labor. To assure a good life for their children they maintained schools. When it was advantageous to send their children to the town school, they organized and maintained private buses. There were, then, many community activities and joint projects which brought Anglos together.

Perhaps, however the most important source of Anglo unity was their non-Mexicanness. Although Anglos were from many different European ethnic groups, they were white, not brown and Mexican. Most Anglos considered themselves superior to Mexicans, and many forms of segregation occurred because of these beliefs. The boundaries between these two groups were the most distinguishing, clearest form of social organization in these small towns. A great deal of the Anglos' energies were dedicated to maintaining this separation. It was done through laws, etiquette, schooling, and even in the practice of religion. Convincing a people of their inferiority and making it acceptable required a great deal of vigilance and effort from Anglos. Such effort and antagonism against Mexicanos further welded Anglos together as a group.

Yet, during the rancho era Anglos were not a highly coordinated controlling group. They were organized enough to maintain their political and economic dominance, but the ordinary North Town Anglo was probably indifferent to the affairs of local government and politics. Local citizens tacitly let their representatives, which included both vicious and benevolent sheriffs, mayors and county judges, emerge as the key leaders and policymakers. These officials were more dedicated to the ideal of keeping taxes low and services minimal than to using local public institutions to serve people. Instead, the pattern of paternalistic service to loyal Mexicano followers developed, and these political patrones or "machines" stayed in power, often for two or three decades.

These long-term Anglo community leaders also derived a degree of their power or ability to control from key higher-level federal policies. The 1900 to 1930 era was a time of virtually no federal or state intervention into local affairs to aid and assist the poor. The Mexicano immigrant had no legal rights and was constantly in fear of deportation. The massive flow of illegal immigrants was overlooked, leaving Mexican-American laborers less able to bargain for better wages. Further, these workers received no state or federal health, education and welfare programs. This lack of protection and support thrust the Mexicano laborers into a more dependent, powerless position. They became easy prey for enterprising ranchers, farmers, and políticos. The local way of life emphasized material success, production, profit and individualism rather than equality and human dignity. Probably not all North Town Anglos participated equally in the exploitation of the early Mexicanos. Neither were Anglos consciously and maliciously exploiters, but the way of life they championed did not spare its working people from degradation or share with them the profits. Ultimately both the oppressors and the oppressed became victims of the culture that they created.

On the other hand, how well organized and united were the Mexicanos as a group? The description of social life in the settlements demonstrated how central kinship also was to the Mexicanos. Perhaps to a much greater degree than Anglos, the extended family of the Mexicano was the focal point of life. Indeed, one could not speak of a Mexicano community in the sense of more than a very circumscribed, defended community.[8] Even, however, in the strictest sense of a defended territory, the Mexicanos were generally unable to control their personal environment. In many ways the Mexicanos were so unorganized as a power-wielding group that they were easily controlled. There were virtually no formal leaders in any of these communities that could weld together the Mexicanos in collective political or economic action.

By 1918 North Town did have a Sociedades de Honoríficos.

Such groups were mutual aid societies that developed to protect the Mexicanos against the Ku Klux Klan. They also asked and received advice from a Mexican border consulate upon occasion about deportation cases. Such societies created a burial insurance fund for their members (50 to 125), and in the event of a death, everyone shared the cost. These societies were a locus for various social activities in the community, and they were often active in organizing local religious celebrations. These organizations never, however, confronted or competed with the Anglos.

The other major way that these Mexicano communities became "defended communities" has already been suggested.[8] The Mexicanos were forced to withdraw into themselves and their own communities, and they responded by maintaining their cultural traditions and social life. They undoubtedly retained their sense of identity and worth through traditional cultural practices. All Mexicanos shared a great deal of expressive culture, a common religion and strong traditions of sharing and cooperation. They were able to share the work, travel, extra food, and good times, and this created a high degree of cultural solidarity. Mexicanos also shared one set of beliefs that united them. They shared the same hatred of the Anglo, which further bonded them together in a common struggle.

Yet, there were also potentially disunifying class and status differences among the Mexicanos. The old-timers shared the same cowboy/farmer distinction that Anglos shared. Vaqueros thought of their profession as superior to *sembradores*. They had a horse and a gun and they did their work off the ground. The *vaquero* lived a dangerous and manly life and he developed a set of specialized skills in riding, roping, and handling horses and cattle that not any man could acquire. The old *vaqueros* were an extremely proud group, and they spoke of some envy between the cowboys and farmers.

The small market towns of this era also contained a growing merchant class. These early *negociantes* were *los ricos* (the rich) in these extremely poor communities. They became small-time money lenders and leaders in the church and the *Sociedades*. They sent their children through grade school, and they began to learn English and the Anglo ways. As these children aspired to and changed, they became a point of envy for some, a new divisive element in the community. Yet social class and occupational and religious differences were not the key sources of fragmentation in these early Mexicano communities. More important, the Mexicanos were spread out geographically and isolated on the *ranchos*. Transportation and communication were poor. They lived with their *patrones*, dependent upon them for credit and protection from the border patrol, the sheriff and sickness. The basis of Mexicano powerlessness and disunity lies in his poverty and the dependence that the labor and credit system created.

The Mexicanos generally believed that they lacked the leadership or organization to confront the Anglo. They did not fight for their rights because the Anglo was perceived as too powerful and clever to overcome. The Mexicano did not necessarily lose faith in himself, but he lacked any explanation for his poverty and misery. He understood that the situation was oppressive, but he reasoned that Mexico was also bad. He did not expect to attain the American ideal of equality, and he did not organize to demand it. In short, the ordinary Mexicano had no ideology of self-determination, i.e., no belief that he should control more of his own environment and make more of the decisions affecting his life.

This assessment of the Mexicano's relative powerlessness and acceptance of his life should not, however, obscure the active resistance of many Mexicanos. Recent research on the Mexicanos in South Texas has revealed the existence of many community leaders with well-developed "radical" ideologies who sought to organize the people.[9] Over 300 delegates from many small South Texas towns met in Laredo in 1910 at the Conferencia Mexicanista and proposed such programs as labor unions, ethnic-political organizations and bilingual education. The intent of these leaders was to go back to their communities and develop Mexicano political organizations. They were, however, subsequently crushed by the local authorities. Many of their participants were jailed and this early attempt at a Mexicano movement was suppressed. Other recent research on early labor movements also suggests considerable "activism" and a strong sense of self-determination among some Mexicano leaders and workers.[10] It would, then, be grossly misleading to argue that

Mexicanos were passive and did not actively protest their oppressive conditions.

Nevertheless, the North Town Mexicanos in the rancho were not a well-organized, power-seeking group. Their resistance to Anglo racism and economic oppression often took more individual, subtle forms of expression, or oppressive conditions were borne stoically. Given the harsh economic and political realities, widespread local rebellions did not occur. Early North Town was politically quiet. It took a series of major economic transformations, and many new ideas and programs from outside North Town to set the stage for and encourage local Mexicano political activity. The period from 1930 to 1960 became crucial, then, as a prelude to the rise of organized Chicano political groups in the sixties and seventies.

PART II: CHANGING LIFE IN THE COLONIA, 1930 TO 1960

Chapter 3

The Changing Political Economy of The Colonia

The early rancho economy gradually yet dramatically changed during the 1930 to 1960 era. Ranching and farming, the production techniques, and the labor needs, were transformed; consequently the basis of Anglo-Mexicano relations changed. This economic transformation of the North Town region involves a complex set of ecological, marketing, technological, and population changes. By the late 1920's, a number of factors led to the general decline of commercial cotton and spinach production. The methods of cultivation and soil conservation were generally unscientific. Particularly the overused, unirrigated lands for cotton suffered extensive erosion and decline in humus.[1] Further, without pesticides the boll weevil destroyed larger and larger portions of the yields.[2] Finally, North Town sharecroppers reported drastically fluctuating cotton prices during the post World War I period. In the late 1920's, conditions were apparently so desperate that many sharecroppers and day laborers began moving to the surrounding towns in search of new job opportunities.[3]

A somewhat similar set of circumstances also existed in the areas of the regions with a booming spinach industry. Initially, many small farmers migrated in and attempted to grow vegetables. Most of them failed, and the vegetable industry was almost nonexistent until someone discovered that the land was extraordinarily good for spinach. By 1920, a spinach boom was developing in nearby Aztlán City. Hundreds of small spinach farmers and a large contingent of Mexican labor moved into the region. In the early days, spinach was simply broadcasted, i.e., the seeds were scattered over the fields instead of drill-planted in rows for cultivation. The land was so fertile that even the simplest production methods could make high yields. Aztlán City, with its new railroad spur (1916), became the spinach capital of the world, shipping as much as eighty percent of the national supply of spinach.[4] The spinach was loose leaf packed and iced and sent by rail through-out the country. Spinach production boomed for approximately ten years. In the late 1920's, however, the fields were increasingly plagued with weeds and mosaic blight or "blue mold," a deadly fungus that killed spinach. The local district records show that more than half of the small spinach farmers had left by 1930, and the census indicates declining production in the late 1930's.[5]

This general decline in agricultural cash crop production in the region was greatly accelerated by the Depression of the 1930's, which residents often described graphically. How many producers actually "went broke" was reconstructed from interviews of old-timers in six settlements. In settlements with heavy concentrations of small farmers, approximately half of the cotton and vegetable farmers lost their land. A few small ranchers were also affected, but the majority of older ranching and farmer/rancher families survived.[6] There were cases where the ranch or farm was sold because the family head died and the heirs were female, but the old families survived the hard times rather well. More important than the percentage who left was the general cutback in production. The prices were so low and money so scarce that local producers simply grew less. Apparently, a good deal of farmland went back into brush and open range land during this period. Some places were abandoned altogether. These trends were only partially reflected in the census data on crop production and land ownership.[7]

Others told stories of how farmers gave away crops to anyone who wanted or needed them. People from La Colonia would go to the farms and get the unsellable vegetables. The federal government also instituted the slaughter of cattle to control supply and raise prices. At times this meat was distributed to local people. There were also several federal government WPA and CCC projects in North Town. Local Mexicanos were employed to build a swimming pool, a library addition and several road and street projects. Both Mexicanos and Anglos felt they suffered hardship, but they also marveled at how people helped each other and adjusted their production and consumption to survive. The most important impact of the Depression was, however, the effect it had on the labor needs and relations of an already declining agricultural system. Not as many Mexicanos were needed in the fields, and the local patrones were generally not wealthy enough, or paternal enough, to simply absorb huge numbers of unemployed laborers. Consequently, many Mexicano agricultural laborers in this era began finding other types and places of work. To a degree these trends are reflected in the census data on migration.[8]

The second general factor underlying the economic transformation of this era was a series of technological innovations. The first tractors were reportedly used in North County around 1932 or 1933. By then the early Model-T trucks of the late 1910's had also been replaced by much larger, tandem-wheel models that carried twice as much. Somewhat later, during World War II, combines for grain and peanuts were also introduced. This trend towards much more mechanized farming was also paralleled by great increases in pump and gravity irrigation.[9] Such modernization of agriculture through mechanization significantly altered the nature of farming and ranching. The new labor needs and character of labor relations on the vegetable farms, stock farms, and ranches of this era will be described later.

A final general ecological factor which also had important economic and political implications was the changing balance of population between the two ethnic groups. Table 1.1 shows the relative growth of the region during the period of 1910-1970.[10] The Mexicano population increased from a regional rate of forty-eight percent of the total population in 1910 to sixty-two percent of the population in 1970. The Mexicano population of North County increased by forty-four percent. In contrast, only two counties in the region reveal any population increase in Anglos. North County reveals a twenty-four percent loss in Anglo population since 1910. Presently sixty-nine percent of the population in North County is Mexicano. In only forty years the Mexicanos have become the majority unit by a substantial margin.

Why the population balance has been changing in this direction is difficult to say precisely. Generally, demographers agree that population change for any group can come about from only two sources: 1) a natural increase (excess of births over deaths) and 2) a net migration (in-migrants minus out-migrants). Unfortunately, the historical data regarding birth and death rates and migration rates are incomplete. The 1970 census reports a county "age-specific" fertility rate, and Table 3. 3 suggests that the Spanish-surname population in North County is almost double that of the Anglos.[11] Further, when the difference in mortality rates are also considered, Table 3.4 indicates that Spanish-surname infants have a greater chance of dying than Anglo infants.[12] Health care for the Spanish-surname population has historically been a critical problem; consequently, the large differences between Mexicano and Anglo fertility rates are even more dramatic because the high Mexicano infant mortality rates should partially reduce such differences.

Finally, determining how much the differences in fertility rates may be due to differences in group in/out migration is difficult. Historical migration data simply do not exist. Table 3.5 suggests, however, that from 1950 to 1970 there was a steady decline in the number of foreign-born residents in this region.[13] This suggests that the North County region is becoming a more indigenous population. In-migration of Mexicanos and Anglos is becoming a less important factor in the growing differences in group population rates. The number of in-migrating Mexican nationals fell dramatically during the Depression years, and rose again after World War II. There is no way to estimate the population increases due to "unrecorded" events such as marriages between citizens and illegal entrants and permanent residents without papers. Undoubtedly, illegal immigration and such marriages stimulated the increases in the Spanish-surname population to some degree, even though the quota for legal entry has remained small since 1928. Conversely, the in-migration of Anglos to the region is generally thought to be miniscule.

The other aspect of the migration factor which may explain growing population differences is the relative out-migration of both Mexicanos and Anglos. Little data on out-migration rates exist , but a limited study of historical school mobility data suggests that both groups are leaving the North Town area at very high rates.[14] More than fifty percent of the Anglo children went on to college and prepared themselves for careers simply not available in these small towns. Anglos in the North County region have generally accepted the lack of expanding opportunity for their children and have prepared them for eventual migration. Generally, the only Anglos who stay or return are females who marry local farmers or ranchers, or the sons of local businessmen and farmers who inherit the land or form a partnership with their fathers. Given some expansion of salaried, clerical, bureaucratic and professional jobs for Mexicanos, it would appear that a somewhat larger proportion of Mexicano youth are staying in North Town after graduation or are returning to assume skilled jobs after advanced education.

Some investigators, and many local North Towners, particularly Anglos, would argue that basic cultural differences affect the fertility rates. It is commonly thought that Mexicanos place a higher value on large families, lack birth control practices due to Catholicism, or are simply "hot-blooded" and "oversexed." Although some differences in cultural values or in poverty may explain fertility differences, it is also important to consider economic factors. In the rancho production system and later in the migrant labor stream large Mexicano families were an absolute necessity. They were encouraged and valued by patrones and contratistas, and any poor sharecropper or migrant laborer who wished to accumulate more capital could use extra hands in the family. Whatever the blend of economic needs and basic cultural differences, the high fertility rates of Mexicanos, not withstanding mortality and migration rates, have greatly outstripped Anglo growth rates in North Town. As indicated, the Mexicano is now a dominant majority, and this demographic factor will surely play an increasingly prominent role in the political struggles occurring in this region.

The general changes in the land, market, production, technology, and population fundamentally altered the old rancho economy. Gradually, farms and ranches emerged which used different production techniques and required different amounts and types of labor. As the local demand for labor declined, Mexicano laborers adapted and found alternative, better paying jobs in the fields and canning factories of the North. The development of this Northern alternative of a migrant labor stream further undermined the traditional, paternalistic rancho economy. The exploitative, paternalistic relationships between the patrones and their debt-ridden sembradores or poorly-paid vaqueros gradually broke down. The decline of this early North County political economy ultimately gave rise to new views of Anglo-Mexicano relations and independent Mexicano political activity. Given the central importance of such economic changes for contemporary ethnic relations, the next sections will describe, first, the changes in various types of Anglo ranches and farms, and second, the Mexicano migrant way of life.

Changing Agricultural Production Systems and Labor Needs

As mentioned, Anglo farms and ranches became increasingly consolidated, mechanized, and irrigated during this era. Moreover, there was a large turnover of land. In six settlements, long-time residents were asked to list the owners and their acreages in 1920 and in 1974. In small farming communities the turnover of land ownership often approached ninety percent. Many of these lands are presently under lease or are consolidated into larger owner-operated farms. In ranching communities, there was a seventy-five percent turnover of the lands, but there were notable exceptions; several larger (5,000 to 20,000 acres) old ranch families still operated their land. Second generation Anglo ranch families, now in their fifties and sixties, were frequently leasing their land for grazing or for crops.

There were, then, very few original owner/operators left in either farming or ranching. For produce and cotton growers, who shifted to peanuts, the percentages of original owner/operators were even smaller. Further, there has been, since the mid-fifties, a growing influx of outsiders. Wealthy businessmen and professionals, are buying local range land. Stories of some New York or Houston doctor "buying the old so-and-so place" passed almost daily among land agents and local farmers. The records of local soil conservation agents indicated that approximately fifty percent of the lands are in the hands of outsiders.

The local tax assessor, from addresses, and land agents, from sales experience, also estimated approximately the same amount of land sales to outsiders. The price of land, from a local perspective, has become "ridiculously high." Unimproved range land that many locals purchased in the twenties for two dollars an acre and in the forties for twenty dollars an acre now sells for $300 to $400 an acre. The price is still rising fast; improved farmland is up to $600 to $700 an acre.

This tremendous inflation of land prices has encouraged many old-timers and their heirs, who no longer farm, to sell out at substantial profits. Actually working their land often brings a much lower return than urban investments. Most local ranchers figure a three to five percent return on their capital. Vegetable farmers expect a ten to twenty-five percent return. A boom year brings a much higher rate and a poor year, losses. A peanut or cotton allotment provides a guaranteed income, which brings a steady ten to fifteen percent return on one's investment. Unless, then, one is a gambler with fresh produce or has the security of an allotment, the local lands are considerably more valuable when sold to people seeking recreational land or tax write-offs.

Who does operate the local lands if not the original families? Generally, there has been a trend back towards tenancy and lease-operation. The present leasers are predominately second- and third-generation South Texas Anglos and constitute a new class of modern businessmen. This group now includes approximately a dozen Mexicano farmers, most of whom were originally _contratistas_ and _truckers_ during the migrant era. One Mexicano family has become one of the world's largest watermelon shippers, and they lease several thousand acres of land, some from the original Anglo families. But generally, the modern rancher/farmer of this area is a middle-aged Anglo between thirty-five and fifty-five who owns a great deal of machinery, tractors, combines, trucks, and pickups, and who may have expensive irrigation equipment or purebred bulls and heifers. But most of these present-day operators own very little land because of its cost and lack of availability. Most farmers also must have substantial loans to operate on a crop-to-crop basis.[15] Such lease operators have pieces of land spread over the region and run highly mobile operations. They rent brushland or improved pasture from three to eight dollars an acre, and improved, irrigational farmland for up to fifty dollars an acre, generally on three to five year leases. The modern operator is always on the lookout for another piece of land and must compete for this scarce commodity.

Because modern agriculture is highly mobile and more diversified, perhaps ninety percent of the modern farm/ranch operators live in the market towns. This movement to the towns began when some large ranchers moved to town in the early 1920's. By the early 1950's, even smaller operators were generally centered in the towns. Since many modern operators must invest large sums for machinery, land preparation, and use, the leased lands must be utilized more efficiently. Only intensive land use will bring a return from the investment and offset heavy interest rates on the loans. Consequently, modern producers practice greater diversification, which makes the distinction between ranchers and farmers increasingly unimportant. Indeed, the modern rancher's and farmer's operations are often as indistinguishable as their common western hats and boots and their pickups. But there were differences in the crop-cattle balance of their operations, which affects the type and amount of labor they need and use.

Although there was a strong trend towards absentee owners and lease operators, there were still a number of owner-operators.[16] Several large cattle companies and large family ranches still exist. There were also some smaller owner-operated farm/ranches that have remained in the hands of original families, and there were places improved by newcomers in the last thirty years. One common kind of operation was what locals call livestock farming. Such an operation typically was on 800 to 1500 acres of improved pastureland. The livestock farmer relies upon his cow-calf herd (fifty to a hundred heifers) and the winter feeding of Louisiana and East Texas stocker cattle for several months. The livestock farmer then sells his calves and the stocker cattle at one of many local livestock auctions that have developed since the war. Some large ranchers also purchased their cattle. Rarely would the small stock farmer have an expensive irrigation system. In some cases irrigating a small piece of land is done to include a son in the ranching/farming operation without buying extensive land.

In some ways, the livestock farmer, with the emphasis on livestock, represents the modern equivalent of the early small dry crop farmer of cotton. The original small cotton farmers who survived have also developed larger, more diversified farms growing mainly peanuts and/or maize. In North County, there were approximately 150 "peanut farmers." In many ways they too are "livestock farmers," but locals categorize themselves as "peanut farmers."[17] Their primary income comes from the staple cash crop rather than their livestock. The average peanut farmer runs a very expensive operation requiring irrigation wells, machinery, and labor. A farmer typically has two irrigation wells ($30,000 apiece) that serve approximately 300 acres. A number of farmers own that much land, but as many others operate on a lease basis. This process of converting cotton lands to peanuts started in the 1930's and was a type of dry crop farming until the early fifties. At that point new irrigation techniques and government allotments made farming profitable, larger scale ventures. Originally, peanuts were harvested with binders and threshed much like oats and wheat were in the Midwest. A good deal of labor was required in bundling, loading and threshing the crop, and local Anglo families exchanged labor and hired Mexicano day labor until the advent of combines in the early fifties. Today, peanut farming is a highly mechanized, diversified operation.

The typical peanut farmer with 300 acres would also lease or own enough grazing land for a herd of 50 to 150 cows and calves. Further, most peanut farmers would supplement their income by bringing in another hundred stocker cattle and grazing them on winter oats for three or four months. Finally, they are likely also to use melons or maize as a rotation crop with peanuts. They may lease the land for melons to a big grower or plant them and contract a sale with a small melon trucker. They also sell their crop in the market town to a peanut pressing company which ships the bulk oil and waste to other food and feed-processing plants. There are also several much larger peanut farmer operators with large acreages (1000 to 1500) and much larger cattle herds, but the pattern would be essentially the same.

The small farmer/rancher of 80 to 200 acres still exists, but most of these people have to work in town or in nearby urban areas to supplement their income. The very small operator is generally someone who still wants to live in the country, or a city man who "keeps his hand in the land and has a few cattle." This group generally includes a growing number of Mexicanos who have made money in their trades and stores or professions. It also includes working class Anglos who never made it into bigger farming or are trying to follow their fathers in a small way. Generally, such small places are anachronisms, or they represent the new back-to-the-country or recreational trends. The small farmer of the past has generally evolved into a fairly sizeable stock farmer or peanut farmer.

The labor used by these two types of producers follows a similar pattern. The laborers who run the machines and manage their irrigation systems were usually local Mexicanos. Historically, some of these laborers represent the most unchanging relationship with Anglo patrones in the rancho. Some local Mexicano families who still live on the ranches are the second generation to work for the owners. Some present-day workers have been with their boss for twenty years or more. The local Mexicanos who still work in the rancho were generally paid the minimum wage, and their male children frequently worked part-time for the owner. Modern-day owners and laborers estimated that approximately fifty percent of these workers live on the ranches, and the rest live in town and commute daily. Those living on the rancho have rent-free but very modest one or two-room houses, and usually a garden and some animals.

Their children ride the bus to school and all these families have cars. However, modern Mexicano agricultural laborers still remain relatively isolated from the new social and political life in North Town. The modern Mexicano farm hands often act as intermediaries and foremen for the Anglo owner in his relationship with mojado (wetback) labor. The "wets" are used for grubbing, fence mending, cleaning and moving irrigation lines, and other heavy manual labor. These "wets" are generally a highly transitory group, often staying several months and then returning to Mexico to visit their families. Many local growers indicated that those who stay several months will often return and leave again periodically. Others, generally unmarried, may stay on a farm or ranch for several years. Others may only work a few days while passing through en route to Texas cities or to Northern and Western agricultural and industrial areas.

The "wets" are paid five or six dollars a day and are given board in small houses, garage apartments, or barns. Generally, the work is very hard and the accommodations quite sparse. The overall working conditions for the local Mexicano have improved considerably since the early period. Some are paid the federal minimum wage and work eight-to-ten hour days. More important, the producer-worker relationships have become less paternalistic. Generally, these modern farms and ranchers need considerably less field labor than the early cotton farmers. The number of local Mexicanos still living or working on the ranchos is a fraction of what it was in the early period.

The large vegetable operator of today is also a far cry from the early small produce farmer.[18] As indicated, the produce industry went through some very hard years in the early thirties, and began to revive during and after the war. Local producers attributed this revival to the coming of a major canning plant, pesticides, herbicides, and an improved market after the war. Very quickly, only a few large growers established themselves as the major operators. Those produce men who survived have generally developed highly integrated production systems that control the growing, packing, shipping, and marketing. The major produce men have their own sheds and a well-developed set of trucking and marketing contacts throughout the United States. They operate their produce business for a nine-month period from mid-October to July and deliver the bulk of this region's winter vegetables to the North.

Several of the largest operations in the region are branches of large urban-based corporations that have come in during the last twenty years. They have other operations in Florida, the Rio Grande Valley, Mexico, and other Southwestern regions. Further, there are also a few individuals who have developed prosperous lease operations. In the Northern parts of this region the vegetable growers have diversified into grain and cotton farming.[19] The bulk of the local growers are, however, original families who have generally built their vegetable empires since the early forties. They are family operations with brothers or fathers and sons sharing the work. One brother or son may be the expert in bookkeeping and shipping, another in field production, and a third in sales.

Some of these operators, particularly in nearby Aztlán County, the major vegetable growing area of the region, own several thousand acres of irrigated land. Others, particularly in North County, operate largely on short-term leases and own much smaller pieces of land. The harvesting of melons, spinach, cabbage and lettuce is still done by hand. Machines are used to dig up potatoes, carrots, and onions, and field labor sacks and loads them. A variety of irrigation systems, open canal, sprinkler, and pipe from deep wells and from rivers are being used. The most common are deep wells and the open canal or movable sprinklers, both rolling pipe and ground level tubes. The vegetables are packed and sacked in the fields and regraded and packed for shipping in sheds in the market towns.

The capital investment of vegetable operators in fertilizer, irrigation, land preparation, cultivation and harvest labor is extensive. This varies considerably with water availability, type of fertilizer and crop, and other factors, but it is not uncommon for growers to invest more than $1,000 an acre to produce a crop. Most vegetable growers have also begun to diversify into other crop areas and into cattle ranching. The vegetable crop lands are put on a rotation system with winter oats and grasses and utilized for cattle. Likewise, soybeans, maize, and hay crops are used in land rotations and sold for cash, or used for cattle feed. This allows the growers to increase greatly their land and permanent labor use, and to create alternative sources of income during bad vegetable years.

The marketing of vegetables also varies considerably with each crop, season, and type of operator.[20] The large operators with sheds sell through brokers and buyers from large chain stores or wholesalers and ship freight cars or truckloads of merchandise out on well-organized schedules. The small growers and larger ones without sheds, however, often supply independent truckers and small brokers who come into the area to speculate on a few loads of melons or onions. Often the small operators fight each other to buy, and competition is keen. Conversely sellers also compete and play off buyers and competitiors against each other, fighting for the best possible price. Most transactions are verbal contracts, and a good deal of competition, luck, and disorder seem characteristic of the small vegetable marketing process. The small producer and buyer have relatively little control over the process, and are much more prone to losses in spoilage, poor grading, and underpricing.

The labor used for local vegetable growing makes up the bulk of present-day North County farm labor. The system of local labor use has gone through a number of changes since the return of vegetables in the mid-forties. From the mid-forties to the late fifties, many of the larger growers apparently relied heavily on bracero labor.[21] During the hey-day of the Northern migrant stream, North County wages simply were not competitive with the Northern sugar beet companies and fruit and vegetable growers and canneries. Most local growers were only able to hold a portion of their workers because of the loyal contratistas. Often growers worked out accommodations where their laborers could go North during the summer with these local contratistas or on their own. The major source of their harvest labor during the late spring and summer months from late October to mid-April, was non-local.

Several local growers estimated that over half of their labor was bracero or "wet," because there weren't enough locals. Local contratistas generally described the same situation. However, as the bracero program became progressively more expensive and as the Northern migrations began to decline (by the fifties), the local growers shifted back to a combination of "wet," green-card, and more or less permanent local labor.

The present-day crews are a relatively stable group of local Mexicanos and green-carders. They are generally under one contractor who works for one grower. The large growers in the vegetable centers have a diverse enough crop rotation to provide roughly nine months of work. The crew labor generally work by some piece rate, e.g., per basket or sack, and live in town or commute back to the border towns. If they are "wets," they live in dormitories often built originally for the braceros. Growers and labor contractors had difficulty estimating the relative decline in field labor needed, but roughly one half as much labor is necessary for harvesting many of the vegetable crops. Since more vegetable packing is done in sheds, there are some semi-permanent shed hands that previously were not used. Some pack on the piece-work system, others are paid the minimum wage. The second part of the local grower's labor force is the permanent hands. Nearly all are locals, and they handle the machinery, fertilization and irrigation systems. They work on an hourly basis and are paid the minimum wage and are given housing, if they wish. The amount of permanent hands needed is generally estimated at one-fifth of the number needed in the forties. This is primarily due to mechanization and vastly improved irrigation systems requiring less cleaning and moving.

The area in general has maintained a relatively stable output of produce, but the total acreage under cultivation has been declining, as has the total number of operators.[22] Most of the increase in output has been due to improved production techniques. The region is, however, generally not an expanding produce region. Most of the new crop expansion has been in feed grains such as sorghum and oats, and there is a slight shift back to ranching in some parts of the region. In the

Aztlán City area, local growers attribute this to poor prices and expensive production costs and to "labor unrest." In this case, the labor unrest refers to the Raza Unida and some recent unsuccessful attemps by the United Farm Workers union to organize farm laborers.

Ranching in the North County region has also gone through a number of major changes. Today, a good sized ranch would start at around 5,000 acres and go up to 20,000 acres. Approximately thirty-five percent of the land is still used for ranching, but perhaps no more than five to ten percent of the local operators describe themselves as strictly cattlemen. Two major trends, 1) marketing demands and organization and 2) federal programs were often cited as major influences on local ranching.

First, the finishing and marketing of cattle is now done more quickly and through local auctions. The trend towards producing lighter, younger animals started in the thirties. By the forties producers were selling 500 to 600 lb. yearlings for finishing on Oklahoma bluegrass and in midwestern feedlots. In the 1940's cattle were still finished out to 1,000 to 1,200 lbs. By the sixties producers were selling 400 to 450 lb., nine-month old steers to feedlots where the cattle were finished out to 750 to 800 lbs in only 150 days. In marketing, cattle are no longer bought by roaming brokers or shipped by rail up North. Most locally produced cattle are sold in regional auction barns that have developed since the war. These auction barns decentralize the cattle trading business and better regulate local sales. Finally, another major development has been the growth of large feedlots that finish out 5,000 to 20,000 cattle in modern, automated facilities. These feedlots provide local ranchers another market for their calves and stockers. Few locally-produced cattle are shipped elsewhere for finishing. The local economy can now afford to finish its own cattle. This development of an integrated, cattle-finishing local economy is, of course, made possible by the growth of irrigated agriculture and grain production in the North County region.

Second, in the early forties the federal ASCA programs for land clearance and water conservation were introduced into North County. Most local ranchers built improved water tanks through these government grants. This Department of Agriculture agency also paid fifty percent of the costs for bulldozing and root-plowing the brushland. According to extension agents, this encouraged the majority of North County ranchers and farmers to clear the land and plant improved grasses such as bermuda and buffle. Such innovations have increased the carrying capacity of the range from one cow per twenty-five acres to one cow per five acres. There have also been a few ranchers who have experimented with irrigated bermuda pastures to lower the carrying ratio to one cow per acre. But the expenses and problems with disease have generally limited this intensive use of the range land. At this stage of development, ranchers prefer to clear their land and use improved dry land pasture and winter oats.

Major technological changes in ranching have also altered the nature of modern ranches. Horses are still used in the brush, but much of the working of cattle is done by pickup, and huge ranches in the area even occasionally use airplanes to round-up cattle. The use of more centralized watering and corral facilities also helps bring the cattle to points where a few men can easily work them. There even exist a few custom cow-gathering outfits who, for twenty-five or thirty dollars a day, will gather cattle with a horse and cow dog. The days of the round-up and the cattle drive as well as the work camps, line shacks, and bunkhouses are long gone. Old-time vaqueros contend that there are no more cowboys left, that few ranchers know anything about horses and the art of working cattle. The labor force of a modern ranch includes several local Mexicanos and "wets", who are often responsible for the crops and farming.

The Changing Social Relationship Between Owners and Laborers

Changing labor needs in all types of ranches and farms have altered the relationship of Anglos to Mexicanos.[23] The historical importance of the Mexicano in the local agricultural economy has declined dramatically. Today, there are a few permanent wage-laborers on all of the modern types of farms and ranches. There are also a few permanent hands and crews left as field labor for the large vegetable producers. Finally, there are new jobs related to agriculture in canning plants, feedlots and packing sheds. Those Mexicanos still working for Anglo producers are also under a very different wage-labor system, and a good deal of the earlier paternalism and chronic indebtedness is gone. The new class of Anglo leasers and absentee landlords with ranch managers are also very different from the original Anglo landowners. They live in town, generally in a strictly segregated Anglo section. Most did not grow up with the Mexicano, and they cannot speak Spanish. They have few personal relationships with their workers and do not expect to develop them.

A few Mexicanos were still locked into paternalistic relationships between owners and workers on the ranchos, in the crews and in some of the local stores. Perhaps no more than five or ten percent of the present Mexicano labor force were locked into traditional relationships with Anglos. The majority of Mexicanos still work for Anglos, but many of these new relationships were more impersonal wage-labor situations.

Another important consequence of the changing production system was the degree to which absentee landlords altered the structure and solidarity of the Anglo community. These new outsiders often had little association with the local community. They came to hunt and party and "to play cowboy." Some made donations to local civic activities like the FFA stock show or the local hospital. Others invited local leaders to their "exclusive" parties. But generally, the growing number of outsiders took little part in running the local community or solving the growing conflict between the ethnic groups. As the old Anglo families and their children left they were increasingly replaced by outsiders.

Alternative Labor Systems: The Migrant Way of Life

The other side of the profound economic transformation which occurred from 1930-1960 was the rise of an alternative labor system for the Mexicanos. As previously indicated, Mexicanos began moving off the rancho into la colonia by the mid-twenties. This intra-county migration is partially reflected in the census data on rural-urban balance. In counties with extensive cotton farming, this was a response to declining cotton production. In other counties, the Mexicano population was more concentrated in the market town and worked as crew labor for the regional vegetable industry.[24] Vegetable growing areas were also affected by declining production. These trends of falling agricultural production were carried on through the Depression years.

During the late twenties, other important alternative labor opportunities simultaneously developed to attract the North Town Mexicanos. Large sugar beet growers and companies from California, Michigan, and Colorado began recruiting Mexican labor in San Antonio and several border towns in the late twenties. Several labor contractors as well as researchers[25] report attempts by local growers to keep recruiters out of the area. Some recruiters were threatened and even had their tires slashed. By the early fifties there were also offices set up in the smaller town and the sugar company recruiters became links between the crews or individual workers and the Northern growers who began attracting local Mexicanos to the North.

After the recruiters signed up a number of people from the region, they generally contracted local troqueros (truckers) to haul the workers North. They were usually paid ninety-five dollars a head in advance. Their job was to organize, load, and deliver the workers and their families to the Northern growers. A trucker would load anywhere from twenty-five to seventy-five people into the flat-bed trucks and drive around the clock to reach the farms. The health conditions on these voyages were eventually condemned and regulated by interstate law in 1955. Many other migrant workers with automobiles also received their advance money and went on their own. After several trips they established contacts with the Northern growers and went back every year on their own. The farmers would write or call them when the crops were ready and the workers faithfully arrived on time.

Once the truckers arrived up North, they stayed during the picking season and often hauled produce to the canneries to make extra money. They were responsible for getting their crew of people to the right farms and for maintaining their general wellbeing. The migrant workers followed many different patterns of work. When the sugar beets were thinned in May and June, they usually went on to other Northern crops or returned to the West Texas cotton fields until beet harvesting in October. Some picked cherries and fruit in Michigan and Wisconsin. Others harvested vegetables in Illinois and Ohio. Most migrants returned to the sugar beets, the most profitable harvest, before returning to Texas in November to begin the winter vegetables such as onions and spinach.

As indicated, opportunities for cotton picking in West Texas also developed during this period. Local labor contractors from these communities began taking Mexicanos to join the "big swing" from Corpus Christi to West Texas. From the early 1900's on, the more economically advanced Rio Grande Valley area spawned labor contractors and crews that served other areas of Texas. Initially, Rio Grande Valley Mexicanos provided the bulk of harvest labor. Aztlán City contractors began taking workers to the West in 1930 and North Town contractors followed in 1934. By this time, a much larger pool of landless wage laborers existed in the towns.

By the early forties, there were approximately thirty-five contractors with a hundred trucks hauling 2,500 laborers. Crew leaders estimated that perhaps twice as many people joined this army of cotton pickers with their own cars. Pickers from these towns usually joined this labor force during July and August and worked from the Texas coast throughout Central Texas. By September and October they were in West Texas, and some even went as far as New Mexico and Arizona. Contractors reported that nearly all of the locally organized crews in these towns followed the West Texas migrant stream rather than a Northern route. Even though the money was better in the North, most local contratistas preferred working West Texas cotton for several reasons. The contractors' had well established contacts, some feared the longer trip, and they generally profited proportionately less from the northern wages than the crew members.

When the Northern and Western migrants returned for the winter months, they were organized by the local contractors. In the area studied, a regional labor system developed and was centered in Aztlán City, the heart of vegetable production. Several large contratistas such as Mr. Suarez organized and hired many smaller troqueros from the other towns and settlements in this nine county region. During the winter season, Aztlán City became the center of activity and hundreds of tents and shacks housed the crews and individuals coming from the North and other towns. Whole families or the males of families in other local communities spent three to four months working, first, the spinach (February to April) and then the onions (May to June). By the thirties a class of Mexicano entrepreneurs had developed to organize the local Mexicano labor. This network of contratistas and crews spread out from Aztlán City and organized all of the local winter labor and perhaps thirty to forty percent of the great migrations West and North. Historically, they developed to fulfill the new labor needs locally and organize the more informal labor recruitment system of the early 1900's. They also began joining the Western cotton migrations, which were initially crews from the older valley settlements, and the Northern beet migrations, which initially recruited from the valley and border towns.

Many of the early Mexicano contratistas began their careers in the late 1920's and early 1930's. They were originally sembradores who had saved their money as sharecroppers and had moved to town and bought a truck. Outside of a few small merchants in the "Mexican Towns," they were the first monied, Mexicano entrepreneurs in these local communities. Nearly all were self-made men with no education who became informal community leaders. Several became important links between the local Anglo _patrones_, sheriffs and politicians, and the Mexicano masses. Their role in local politics and the mobilization of voters will be described later in the discussion of changing political machines. By the forties some of these _contratistas_ became important political brokers as well as landed farmers, merchants, and money-lenders. The most industrious and successful third generation Mexicano community leaders were often descendants of these early labor contractors. They were also the ambiguous, hated figures in the migrant experience who were the ambitious go-betweens for the Mexicano community and the Anglos.

In retrospect, many migrants saw them as the Mexicano who turned on his own kind and became rich on the sweat of _La_ _Raza_. Others pointed out that some crew leaders were honest and good to their workers. A good crew leader had to be quite a good talker. He had to be able to joke with people, raise their morale, and to goad or cajole them into working harder. _Contratistas_ had to pretend to hate the boss for the workers, and to hate the workers for the boss. They often pretended to do the workers favors. For example, when it rained, and there was no work, the families ate "on the tab." Sometimes the crew leader was supposed to pay for this:

> The company had given him the money, but he never told the workers. Instead, he would say, 'I fed you, and you owe me such and such, and I will pay, don't worry, I will take care of you.' Other times he would pretend to find us extra-good fields because we were the best workers, but he already had his assignment, he knew, but many people believed he was doing us a favor.

The crew leader held a great deal of power over his workers. He kept track of how much they ate in his little black book, and he weighed and marked down how many baskets or boxes each person picked. Most old Mexicano field hands were sure that he cheated them on their expenses and on the time worked; presumably, the _contratistas_ would work the field hands an extra half hour a day. His clock was the one everyone followed. If he said six-thirty was six-o'clock,no one questioned him. Crew leaders also received a significant percentage for each hundred pound of cotton picked. For example, around 1930 pickers were receiving thirty to thirty-five cents a hundred while crew leaders received as much as ten to twelve cents a hundred. Most workers did not question the crew leader, and the crew leader was careful not to cheat flagrantly and offend his workers. He got his percentage from piece work and from the ways he "cut corners." For example, most _contratistas_ tried hard to entice the best workers in the communities. They gave some families the best housing or the best fields to keep them happy. Several old-timers claimed that most contractors liked the _bracero_ labor better because they were not only harder working but also completely ignorant. One common way of extorting the *braceros* was to arrange for them to buy from one grocer who in turn gave a kick-back to the *contratista*.

As indicated, the very early labor migration to the West and to the North was initially under either local contractors, or local *troqueros*, who were company representatives or small-time operators. However, as the Mexicano migrant families became accustomed to migrating North, some became more independent of the *contratistas* and crew system. The enterprising Mexicano migrant who owned a car and knew the growers often became a "free wheeler." As early as the mid-thirties there were Mexicano families beginning to travel to the North on their own, and this pattern grew steadily as the years passed. By the mid-fifties the vast majority of migrants had become "free wheelers," and the number of local *contratista* crews or *troqueros* hired by the company decreased.[26]

These "free wheelers" traveled in small groups of three or four families. Very often they were an entire extended family of uncles and aunts and in-laws by marriage. Other times, these small caravans were neighbors and *compadres* who followed one particularly knowledgeable, successful migrant. Usually, the more knowledgeable and successful migrants had trucks, and instead of going in cars, the people would all ride in the truck. Such small *troqueros* neither worked for the companies nor hauled people by the head. They organized and hauled bien conocidos (close acquaintances), often the same group for ten or fifteen years. Some families report going together in small car caravans or with these small truckers for many years. Others frequently changed migration routes and partners seeking better work and money.

The striking things, however, about the rise and extensiveness of "free wheelers" were their ingenuity and group solidarity. The Mexicanos who knew hard times on the ranchos were willing to take great risks and help each other succeed in the migratory stream. It can be argued that the contratistas historically helped local Mexicanos find these new opportunities and become more independent of local patrones. But this would underplay how quickly many enterprising Mexicanos adapted to the new opportunities. They organized themselves into small, highly mobile and flexible bands that exploited the opportunities up North. Neither the contratistas, the growers, nor the government made many individuals prosper from the migrations. The individual Mexicano and his friends and relatives were the basis of migration success.

It is important to understand how central this migration experience was in changing the Mexicano's relationship to the Southwestern production system. First, those individual Mexicanos who were successful at saving money and organizing their own work experience generally built themselves better homes and sent their children through school. Some of them accumulated enough surplus capital to build little stores or to get their oldest children into stable, wage-labor jobs in local stores, canning plants, and skilled labor jobs. During the forties and fifties, many of these third generation Mexicanos helped their younger brothers and sisters through high school, and some, through college. Some extended families became settled, non-migrant families who only migrated in the summers to make extra money. In only two generations, then, the "more prominent" North Town Mexicanos had developed from the poorest peones to a stable, lower-middle class worker in the local market town. The migrant experience was a very important form of power for the Mexicano, power in terms of independent wages and small business investments which further freed them from Anglo patrones.

The migrant experience also enabled Mexicanos to see South Texas in a different light.[27] Many of the returning migrants could not slip back into the life of North Town without new expectations. Migrants felt that they had met a different kind of Anglo up North. Many were amazed that there were few segregated places and that some young Anglos even wanted to date their children. Others had their first experience of visiting an Anglo house and eating food from their table. The Northern schools, health services, and houses also were relatively better, and many of their fellow migrants settled successfully in northern towns.

The migration, they say, was a kind of adventure, something one cannot understand unless experienced. The migrants remember fondly the "big paychecks" and being able to buy their children new clothes, as well as the chistes people told and their compañeros or compadres. They also remember the hard work, but one migrant put it quite eloquently,

> Life wasn't so bad. It was good too. I mean, the whole family was together. We worked side-by-side. We did things together more. There was much love...even though we got pretty damn mad when somebody wouldn't go to sleep or something. Things were not so bad. We made pretty good money. Lots of us did, and we raised a little hell up there, man, do you know what I mean? We had a little fun, too.

Migrating was an experience which drew the family together in a struggle for survival. Countless stories were told about how children and parents were drawn together and dependent upon each other. In the labor camps people shared transportation, food, medicine, and babysitting. Particularly in the larger northern camps the migrants organized bailes and celebrated many occasions together. The local bands and conjuntos traveled North in the summers where the money flowed and hard-working people needed to celebrate, drink, and dance. To understand the migrant experience, an outsider must remember that most migrants had experienced even greater hardships, isolation and peonage under the share-cropper system. The migrant labor system represented an entirely different type of wage-labor system. Even though the pay was still very low, people knew they were going to be paid a salary, and that the harder they worked, the more they made. On the *rancho* they were at the mercy of the weather, the *patrón* and fluctuating crop prices. For a crew laborer, such problems were somewhat alleviated, and he was guaranteed a minimum amount of security. Entire families would still go to the fields together to work, but they were paid by the baskets and loads produced.

People developed skills for working steady and fast, stopping only a few minutes for the lunch of tortillas and dry meat they brought from home or for some water. When work was done in one field, they would move to another, never missing a day's work, quite different from *rancho* days. The daughter of a *contratista* tells about a working day:

> We would go to the field very early in the morning, like at five o'clock. That was the ideal time to pick cotton because it was still wet from the dew and thus heavier. We wanted to start working right away but the owner would not let us. My father usually brought a truck load of people, families from the neighborhood that would come to work with us. He was responsible for them and would receive a proportion of what they produced. When the patron told us to start working we would fall on those fields like busy bees. I worked as fast as I could. Sometimes my father would come over and help me in my work by filling my bag. I enjoyed that. What I didn't like was when he helped other people who did not belong to our family. I would ask him: 'Why do you help them?' And he'd say: 'Because it is good to help others; if I am good to them they will be good to me.' and it was true, those people were very loyal to my father and always came back to work with him and for no other contratista. About noon, we'd all stop to eat our rolled tortillas. It would take us no longer than fifteen minutes to eat lunch. My father brought fresh water in great wooden barrels and we could drink from it once in a while. After noon, the work became slower and heavier, because the cotton was dry and it would take us longer to make a 100-pound bag, for which we were paid.

Yet, in spite of the positive aspects of the migration, it would be incorrect to romanticize the migrant way of life. The migrants also told many depressing stories about housing and unsanitary conditions. One prominent school teacher remembered how he stayed in a huge oil storage tank which the grower had cut open and placed in it some cotton sacks for beds. Others told of leaky roofs, of corncobs for toilet paper, and of rancid drinking water. Life was bouncing in dusty trucks, cleaning up dirty shacks, and packing one's belongings. Not all northerners treated the migrants kindly, either. Many local growers and policemen hated these outsiders. The racism of Northern whites and the feelings of these migrants are eloquently expressed in recent Chicano literature.[28] The harsh working and living conditions of stoop labor was not an experience that a weak, lazy people could have survived.

It is also important to remember that many Mexicanos did not succeed economically through migration. Many remained tied to the local contratistas and growers. Most migrants were neither able to get out of debt nor into some independent business enterprise. Most remained locked into the migrant way of life until there was simply no more work. Indeed, the pattern of recruitment and crew composition suggests that the poor usually got poorer. The poorer, less educated Mexicanos with very large families made less progress. Exploitative crew leaders were particularly successful at keeping those workers who lacked savings and transportation and whom poverty made meek and trusting. It was usually the migrants with medium-sized, well-disciplined families who became "free wheelers." The more enterprising ones were able to pick and choose the more favorable work situations. Their boldness was their salvation.

By the early 1960's the entire migrant labor system had greatly changed, and the crew labor system had virtually vanished. There was much less work because machines cut the beets, shook the fruit trees and even picked the tomatoes. Presently, a few crews still go North, but most migrants are "free wheelers" who have personal contacts with certain farmers, or who sign up through the Texas Employment Agency. Most present-day migrants are part-time migrants. Increasingly, they go for one crop or to a few places to pick up some extra money. Most wait until their children finish school in May and return in time for school in September. Others migrate to work for seven or eight months in Northern factories, and they return to their winter homes in the South Texas communities. They establish their unemployment in the North and collect it during the winter months. Still others work in the fields during the summer months, finding employment in the canning factory, the packing sheds, or the schools (as aides)in the winter. A small percentage come back to rejoin the local crews who work for the big growers in the area. Even Mexicano teachers who have been migrants go up North to work the beets. Some talk of it as the "Mexicano way of life" and not only seek the money but also the heritage of their parents as well as their early experiences as migrants.

The migrant life , which sustained the majority of the second generation (1920 to 1940's) and third generation (1940 to 1950's) is rapidly disappearing. The problems of resettlement and reemployment are massive. Many of the South Texas towns have hundreds of ex-migrant families who have neither been able to save nor make the adjustment to a settled, stable job in the local economy. They cling to the small houses they they were able to buy and long for a vanishing way of life. They often devise ingenious strategies for surviving. Perhaps the grandmother receives old age assistance; the children receive free school breakfasts and lunches; and the entire family gets food stamps and other welfare benefits, or families may have the mixed blessing of an unwed daughter on AFDC money. The younger children work part-time and the mothers may be maids or dishwashers. Everything goes into "the family pot," and somehow, many of these part-time migrants survive.

The profound changes that these economic transformations have created cannot be exaggerated. The brief descriptions presented herein are not intended to describe fully the economic histories of the local production systems or of the labor migration. Nor are they detailed portraits of any key figures or roles in this process of transformation. We wanted to present enough description to illustrate how changes in the material culture underlie the changes in political and social relations. Before discussing changes in the social and cultural life of North Town Anglos and Mexicanos, we must describe the important shifts in local politics and the forms of Anglo political control.

The Changing Local Political System

During the early part of this period, from 1930 to the late 1940's, the local leadership patterns in the city, schools, and county generally changed very little.[29] Indeed, this was the heyday of the two local political machines already described.

The backgrounds and orientation of local Anglo leaders remained basically the same as in the rancho era.

Other important aspects of the local political system also showed little change during the Pre-World War II period. First, public policies in the city and school did not become consciously responsive to the Mexicanos until after the war. Second, the gradual Mexicanization of local bureaucracies at the lower and middle levels of management only began in earnest during the 1950's. Third, some of the most oppressive sheriffs described by the Mexicanos operated during this period. Last, there were still no major Mexicano political organizations or elected leaders until the fifties. It appears that North Town Anglo political leaders began responding only when North Town Mexicanos and the federal government began pressing for these changes after World War II. Although Anglos generally initiated few new programs, they did begin to change and adapt to the new demands of Mexicanos.

Perhaps the most independent and progressive move on the part of North Town Anglo leaders was their overthrow of El Cameron. By 1940 several Anglos had engineered the partial defeat of the manager/sheriff, Mr. Cameron. Earlier Anglo leaders claim that they literally sneaked a new reform mayor and two councilmen into office with a surprise write-in campaign. Twenty-five or thirty prominent citizens quietly organized the take-over. They generally agreed that "Cameron was getting too big for his britches," and "was ruining the name of their town." The reformers wanted a more efficiently run city.

None of the reformers, however, mentioned overthrowing Mr. Cameron because they wanted to help Mexicanos. On the contrary, many prominent Anglos contended that the only reason Mr Cameron had become so strong was due to his control over the "ignorant Mexican voters."Mr. Cameron, if threatened, could mobilize several hundred Mexicano votes and a fair number of Anglos; consequently, the reformers decided to wait and write in their own candidates. At that time, Mr. Cameron was in"Mexican Town"trying desperately to round up his votes, but he found out about the plan too late to keep his titular mayor and councilmen friends in office. The election was won by only fifty-five votes, yet it marked the beginning of several reforms.

Initially, the new council, led by Mayor Goodman, a prominent rancher/businessman, re-issued a bond to pay off over $100,000 in debts. This helped restore the city's credit rating. Next, they put the record keeping, the utilities, and tax collection in the hands of other people. Mr. Cameron, however, remained as sheriff for another ten years and weathered two minor election challenges. Finally, in 1948 he was defeated in a hotly contested city marshall's election (more than 700 votes) by a man with support from many anti-Cameron Anglos.

During this era, city government was marked by a few controversial issues, but signs of change were evident. By the post-war era the city government was generally moving to transform North Town to a more urban environment. Ordinances were passed to regulate fireworks, animal slaughter, beer sale, gasoline storage, outdoor toilets, vacant log use and garbage collection. In the 1950's street drainage, street pavement, and garbage collection in "Mexican Town" became hotly debated issues. In 1955 several prominent Mexicano businessmen requested the council to pave and light streets. For the next several years Mexicano community leaders periodically requested the council to put in curbs, gutters, and paved streets to ease their drainage problem. Lighting and paving the street leading to the Catholic church was also a major priority.

North Town city councils of the fifties and early sixties generally included several of the most prominent local businessmen, the local doctor and two prominent "modern farmers." The councils of the fifties also included "working men" and "Democrats," but they were characterized as less influential. By the mid-fifties the prominent, well-to-do Republicans ran the city hall. They generally prided themselves on continuing the progressive, fiscally responsible policies of Mayor Goodman, a Democrat. They also saw themselves as beginning to help solve the problems of disorder, lawlessness, and filth in "Mexican Town," without excessive outside federal assistance. The emerging Mexicano leaders were particularly vocal on the question of "cleaning up Mexican Town." One city councilman, a local rancher, was called

"Mr. Clean, the gringo who wants to shine us all up." He reportedly gained this reputation for his vigorous campaigns to clean up vacant lots and the winter homes ("shacks") of migrants during the sixties. On other programs the councils apparently received considerable support, but there was a growing impatience among the new Mexicano middle class.

It is important to note that the city councils of the fifties and early sixties moved to include more Mexicanos into the local government in jobs other than janitors and street sweepers. Responsible Mexican businessmen were being included on the Board of Equalization, the election boards, and various other committees by the mid-fifties.[30] They were also being hired to be assistant clerks, bookkeepers, water inspectors, deputies, and other middle-level positions. None had key leadership roles, but compared to the thirties and the forties, Mexicanos were becoming much more visible as public servants. Some Mexican-Americans had graduated from garbage collector and ditch digger, but still did not have any decision-making power.

The issue of federal assistance became more inportant in the late fifties when local Mexicanos began requesting some form of low-income housing. The early discussions of this issue aroused much opposition to such "socialistic programs" that would undermine the American way of life. By 1962, however, the new council, which included a balance of Democrats and Republicans and the first Mexicano councilman, voted to apply for Urban Renewal.

Apparently a great deal of misunderstanding existed concerning the urban renewal program, and even many Mexicanos, including an outspoken "radical" restaurant owner, Mr. Guerra were against it. Likewise, many of the more conservative ranchers and businessmen saw it as a federal give-away program which would "break the government." Consequently, no such programs were developed until the late sixties.

In some areas of public policy, the local Anglo leaders of the fifties were, however, slowly becoming more responsive. For example, in North Town the city council was discussing improvements in water, drainage, lights, and pavement for "Mexican Town" in the early fifties. Time and again the council agreed in principle to make various improvements but invariably "backed off" because of lack of resources.[31] Small South Texas towns do have very small budgets, and local people are often reluctant to raise taxes. In those times there were also less higher level government programs, but as the early Mexicano leaders pointed out, the Anglos were reluctant to tax their side of town to help "Mexican Town". They avoided incurring the wrath of friends and neighbors.

For whatever reasons, community improvement projects were often slow in materializing. By 1964 the water tanks had been approved, and by 1967 a number of streets in the flooded area had been paved. But the major problem, drainage, despite several expensive surveys and considerable discussion, still remains unresolved. The North Town council also began discussing the possibility of subsidized federal housing projects during the mid-fifties, and they ultimately build one hundred units in 1968. The general lag time on most projects seemed to be from ten to fifteen years, which has often led to greatly inflated completion costs. It also left the increasingly active local Mexicano leaders frustrated by the slow pace of change set by Anglo-controlled councils.

The other North Town political machine under the thirty-four year guidance of Judge Parsons ended in 1954 with the judge retiring in poor health. Before retiring, he gave his support to the present judge, Mr. Ransom, a former county commissioner and drugstore clerk. Some Anglos contend that his machine continues under the present judge, but others feel that Mr. Ransom has never developed the stature and control of Judge Parsons. Prominent Anglos often speak unfavorably of Ransom and indicate that they have been unsuccessful in "getting rid of him." In the early 1950's a prominent lawyer from one of the town's oldest families challenged him unsuccessfully. The same group of "rich Anglos" reportedly challenged him again in the sixties, but with the strong support of rural Anglos, several hundred Mexicanos, and the Masons, Judge Ransom has held office for more than twenty years. During this entire era, the earlier pattern of commissioners and county officials holding office for ten to twenty years continues.

The major issue that most residents remembered was the loss of one rural school district which contained oil lands. Annexing this area in the early fifties could have profited the North

Town school district. The judge and commissioners were frequently blamed for this oversight. The other source of concern usually mentioned was an occasional county sheriff who had become too "big for his britches" and had begun "whoring around." Others made charges that Judge Ransom and some of the commissioners were crooked, but no one substantiated such accusations. Generally, residents were critical of county officials and the judge for doing little, but the relative stability of county leadership suggests that no major issues or scandals rocked the courthouse during this era. Nor can one point to any major efforts on the part of the county government to address itself to the problems of urban or rural Mexicanos.

Local politics centering on school issues were generally quiet during the forties and fifties. Under the stimulus of new state funding, formulas based on average daily attendance (Gilmer-Akin Act, 1949), and the momentous civil rights cases (Brown vs. Topeka, 1954), the issue of improving segregated schools became an important community issue in this region of Texas. Some of the early informal political organizations, the G.I. Forum and LULAC (League of United Latin American Citizens) stressed education. They worked for scholarships and sought to raise the educational aspirations of Mexicanos. The North Town LULAC did not press the local school district for a strong desegregation program. By 1948 the North Town schools had been integrated above sixth grade, and the influx of large numbers of Mexicanos into the high school ultimately raised new issues. These conflicts over student extracurricular honors, grading, grouping and tax bonds will be described in chapter four. The Mexicano leaders of the fifties still tended to favor a segregated Mexican Parent Teachers Club to improve their community school. School desegregation became a sensitive issue only with increasing outside federal pressure and greater Mexicano political activity.

The Rise of Informal Mexicano Political Groups

As Mexicanos began attending council and school board meetings and demanding more and equal services, they developed their own nascent political organizations. Most of this new activity was attributed to returning war veterans and to lawyers from the San Antonio G.I. Forum and LULAC groups. These state-wide organizations helped organize a G.I. Forum chapter in 1953 and a LULAC in 1954. The G.I. Forum was for youth between sixteen and twenty-one, and they had approximately a hundred members. The organization only lasted for a year, and their meetings were mainly social and educational. They talked about local problems in town and what needed to be changed. They also had a baseball team and held various cake sales and barbecues to raise money. Many of the key members in this organization switched to the LULAC when they were organized in 1954. Two prominent Mexicano lawyers from San Antonio came to town and called a meeting of local leaders to discuss the need for education and college scholarships.

They also tried to educate the Mexicanos about "how the Anglos run the schools and the city." These outsiders urged the Mexicanos to run for such offices and have representatives. This ultimately meant organizing the voters and paying their poll tax, even though these groups were formally not set up as political parties.

Initially, the North Town LULAC had 150 members, of which fifty were active.[32] They held raffles, barbeque suppers, and bingo games to raise poll tax money. They also bought grocereies for poor people, gave scholarships, and donated money to widowed members. All of the members were Democrats, and there was no strategy of create a separate party, or to openly confront the Anglos. These early LULACer's ran as independents, and LULAC never openly supported them, but the key eight to ten members frequently met and decided who would be the local candidates. During the elections they also led the effort to register people, sponsored rallies, and usually spent three to four Sundays before elections working the barrios for votes. Several local businessmen, county and highway employees, an insurance salesman, and a few key truckers and farmers led the group. Other local grocers participated by giving food for the rallies. One restaurant owner always gave them barbecue plates to sell for fund raising. In short, the new Mexicano middle class was the backbone of this new informal ethnic political group.

In the early sixties these Mexicano leaders began running candidates for the city council and school board. They were successful in electing and re-electing three men to the city council and two men to the school board from 1960 to 1965. For a two-year period, they actually had a majority in the city council. Several of these elections brought out 1000 voters, and the Mexicano vote reached 560. This level of political participation had been unheard of, involving twice as many voters as usual. The vote totals also clearly indicated a block or ethnic voting pattern. Each candidate from the different groups received almost identical totals.

Generally, the new Mexicano leaders were not openly aggressive towards Anglos. They were careful to use no strong references to Anglo racism or political corruption. These new leaders were seeking some minimal representation, not control of local institutions. The idea of "controlling the town" in the fifties and early sixties struck several of them as amusing, (i.e., perceived as so improbable as to be laughable). Consequently, the elections were relatively calm. Anglos were generally concerned but not fearful of a "Mexican take-over." In fact, many of the earlier Anglo leaders did not seem to know of the LULAC or sense that an informal group of Mexicanos were beginning to plot and politick seriously. Nevertheless, these new developments marked a significant break with the politics of the pre-World War II era. The Mexicanos were beginning to demonstrate the potential for becoming an independent political force in North Town, and Anglo leaders began recruiting Mexicano candidates and seeking to form political coalitions.

By the early sixties, the prominent North Town Anglo leaders had invited the two most successful Mexicanos, a grocer and a melon farmer to be on the city council and the school board. These "tokens," as some Chicano activists labeled them, were the first attempts to include a Mexican representative in elected leadership positions. This was widely perceived by the younger, more active Mexican-Americans as a tactic, and some vowed to run independently from the Anglos and to beat them. Other Mexicanos not in control of the city were approached to form an alliance. A local Anglo car dealer, described by the early Mexicano leaders as more liberal minded and not one of those "silk stocking" type Anglos, formed a secret alliance with the newly "appointed" grocer and a local Mexicano insurance man. These two Mexicano leaders were officers in the local LULAC chapter and the Mexican Parent-Teachers Club (PTC). They had become increasingly active on the issues of local police, street paving and drainage, and a new Mexican school. This threesome swore to vote consistently with each other and to solve these problems in the Mexicano community.

This secret coalition became evident during several heated council meetings, and the Anglo car dealer came under considerable fire from the "better class" Anglos. Generally, the Anglos split between what several people called the "Main Drive Anglos" and the "silk stocking, hilltopper Anglos." The "Main Drive Anglos" refers to a working class and middle income subdivision, and the "hilltopper Anglos" is a reference to the upper income, upper-middle-class area of town.[33] These references also roughly correspond to political party preferences. The "Main Drive" Democrat was a big spender of tax money and the "hilltopper" Republican was a fiscalizer who cuts the expenses of public institutions. Finally, this conception also refers to a tendency for working class Anglos to be less educated, more crude and rural in manners, and for upper-middle-class Anglos to be educated and more urban in lifestyle. However, since the early North Town LULAC did not provide a sustained challenge, these social differences among Anglos only created temporary conflicts, not permanent splits. Generally, both factions had representatives on the school and city boards. During the early sixties however, the "main Drive Anglos" and their Mexicano allies tended to control local city and school politics.

The coalition between some Main Drive Anglos and LULAC Mexicanos helped "keep out" more "radical" Mexicano organizations such as PASSO (Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations). Outside organizations stayed out for several reasons, but primarily because of a split in the North Town Mexicano group between "moderates" and "radicals."[34] The members of both factions were actually indistinguishable in terms of class, ethnic, and language differences, but they did have some disagreements on proper political tactics. The more "radical" elements included several businessmen. The most active was Mr. Guerra, a restaurant owner, who was described as "crazy" and "an Anglo-hater." He was against the secret coalition with "Main Drive" Anglos. But when local Mexicanos were approached by PASSO organizers in 1962, they rejected "going PASSO." The moderates feared both a power play by an outsiders' "radical" coaltiion, and the response of local Anglos. The "radicals" were also ambivalent about having outsiders come in, and they were primarily interested in criticizing the moderates about having "really independent Mexicanos in there."

Idealogically, there seemed to be little difference between the old LULACer's who labeled themselves "more radical" and "more moderate." They were all committed to electoral politics, fiercely loyal to America, and generally for a gradual introduction of new federal social welfare programs such as urban renewal, migrant education, and social welfare service programs. The more "radical" elements seemed to place more emphasis on being Mexicano and were more distrustful of Anglos. The more moderate LULAC leaders were often criticized for "becoming too Anglo."

By the mid-sixties, both Mexicano factions were represented in the city and school, but the continuing squabbling and personal conflicts eventually split the LULAC Club, and the informal political group which sprang from it. The key incident which apparently ended the club was the treasurer's mishandling of some of the funds. At that point the more moderate members withdrew, accusing the "radicals" of mismanagement. Even before this incident, however, the outspoken Mr. Guerra had "dropped out," because he apparently suffered too much criticism about his personal affairs. He, as well as several other early Mexicano political leaders, expressed a great deal of bitterness about how ungrateful his own people were, how they turned against him. He also contended that the Anglos harassed him and several others who were active. He claimed that he was refused a loan for his business and threatened with a foreclosure on another debt. By the mid-sixties this first serious effort by Mexicanos to "play politics" ended quietly.

Changing Informal Anglo-Mexicano Political Linkages

The challenged Anglo leaders of the post-war era sought to establish new binding relationships with the growing number of Mexicano voters. Up to the post-war days, very few Mexicanos voted. There were, however, local Anglo politicians who developed blocks of several hundred Mexicano voters. They did this through a variety of favors, or apparent favors; if they needed the votes, they would call upon "their" indebted Mexicans to vote. Very frequently these local sheriffs or judges or mayors ran unopposed; consequently they did not need to mobilize "their Mexicans." Nevertheless, every good political entrepreneur "got himself a good Mexican to get out his vote."[35] Even the earlier Anglo politicians had "their man in Mexican Town" to help round up votes.

In their descriptions of "their Mexicans" a general pattern emerged. Labor contractors, cantina and restaurant owners, and Mexicanos working in public positions such as a city or postal clerk had natural contacts with many Mexicanos. They also had occasion to do them favors, e.g. extra work, a free beer, and a hand-delivered letter. Such men were also sometimes financially better off and occasionally made private small loans. Generally, however, the local merchants were the money lenders, and they did not usually make good go-betweens for the would-be Anglo politician. Further, some exceptional Anglos also served as the leg-men for the key Anglo political leaders. They were generally small-time businessmen or bureaucratic functionaries who dealt frequently with the Mexicano community and knew Spanish.

In North Town Sheriff Cameron had operated through a local cantina owner and the local dance hall proprietor. He reportedly allowed both to bootleg liquor illegally and frequently did them favors by disposing of rowdy drunks. In return, Mr. Cameron received their assistance during election time. Several old-timers described how he would ride around "Mexican Town" with these men during the week before elections. They also actively assisted him in bringing people to vote. Mr. Cameron's other major intermediary was a well-known labor contractor. He decribed how the Anglos always came to his house seeking advice and political assistance. He frequently advised his workers how to vote and actively campaigned for "el Cameron," or the "man" as he called him. All of the ex-politicians interviewed emphasized how important it was to have such connections with the Mexican community. Without able intermediaries it was increasingly difficult to control the local Mexican vote.

One prominent political intermediary described the common feelings and type of relationship these 1940's and 1950's intermediaries had:

> Ya, sure, me and _______ and _______ always used to help the gringos get Mexican votes. We worked hard to talk to those people so they would vote. Mexicanos in those days were muy pinchones (very tight, closed). You had a hell'uva time gettin' 'em to come out of their house and help you with a vote. They just wasn't used to such things, so the gringos needed us real bad. We all used to work for all the Democratic candidates who would come in here looking for Mexican votes. I even worked for Dolph Briscoe once. He was a young man then. He came to talk with me. The sheriff brought him over because he knew I was gettin' pretty active then. He told me about himself and how he liked Mexicans and wanted their votes. As he was walking away he put four twenties in my shirt pocket I was so surprised; man, I worked like hell for him talking to people. After he gave me the money me and my friends went out and had a big dinner. We drank and talked and celebrated. Then we all worked for him. Man, we thought we was in the big time with all that money. I'm ashamed to say that now, but it sure was good then.

To many aspiring Mexicano políticos of this era such "Anglo connections" were the most one could hope for. Such roles were the beginning of political activity.

Even though this practice of having a "Mexican contact" was important to leaders like Cameron and Paulson, the post-war era apparently greatly increased the need for such linkages with "Mexican Town." As the landed patrones controlled their workers less directly and Mexicanos left the isolated life on the rancho, a new set of conditions developed for Anglo politicians. The number of North Town Mexicano voters in the fifties more than doubled, due to general population increases and the LULAC voter registration drives.[41] A much smaller percentage of

Mexicanos were totally dependent on local Anglo ranchers and businessmen. Many new ideas about civil rights, political activity, the ability of Mexicanos, and the injustice of Anglos stirred some segments of the Mexicano community. Mexicanos became less economically dependent, more critical of his local conditions and more aware of his civil rights; consequently control through giving favors became less effective. New, more direct links into the Mexicano community were necessary as fear, paternalism, and voter apathy gradually declined.

This greater need for better connections in and communication with "Mexican Town" was well outlined by a very perceptive and promimemt local vegetable grower:

> In the old days when my father and his friends ran this town there wasn't much to it. Hardly anybody voted except your friends and your peones. But as time went by I think most of us woke up and realized that the Mexicans were beginning to raise a little hell and were getting harder to handle. Lots of the old Anglos moved away, there was a new bunch running city hall. Some of us, like me, have always had our ear out in the Mexican community; we let them know what is going on through our contractors, but other Anglos who want to be somebody around here have to know somebody to help them. Take ole _______ for example, he is a good businessman, a good Mexican, somebody who will help and every ambitious young buck knows that; so they ask him to help.

It was difficult to reconstruct the network of relationships that developed between local Anglo leaders and prominent Mexican - Americans. Yet from many such testimonials, it was clear that post-war Anglos recognized their growing isolation from the

Mexicano community. They also recognized that they had to make such connections if they were to win local elections in the future.

This Anglo "courtship" or inclusion of influential Mexicanos into leadership positions meant more Mexicanos on appointed city committees and in elected city and school positions. Although the more extreme, "red neck" Anglos refused to accept that Mexicanos were capable of being local leaders, the more progressive Anglos reasoned that some Mexicans were qualified. A "qualified Mexican" was one who "thought Anglo" and was a "good businessman." Mexicanos who spoke good English, had some formal education, cooperated, and had good morals i.e., avoided _cantinas_ were prime candidates.

Slowly, the Anglo power-holders in the post-war period were being forced to share at least some prestigious public positions. Along with the increasing use of political intermediaries and sporadic Anglo-Mexicano political alliances, this sponsoring of selected Mexicano candidates was intended to help Anglo leaders reestablish connections with Mexicanos no longer dependent upon _patrones_ and _contratistas_. It is important to remember, however, that such new accommodations and political linkages occurred in public community affairs, _not_ in the private social life of either ethnic group. The extent to which such changes affected Anglo-Mexicano relations in daily social life in key cultural institutions will be discussed in chapter four.

Chapter 4

Changing Cultural Institutions and Social Life in The Colonia

During this era there were also many other signs of change in local ethnic relations. Some areas of life changed dramatically, while other areas and institutions still preserved a degree of Anglo privilege. By the mid-forties, "No Mexicans Allowed" signs in local restaurants were gone. The spread of Mexicanos to Anglo sections of town was also gradual but dramatic. A set of maps on ethnic housing patterns in nearby Aztlán City illustrates that Mexicanos were gradually moving "across the tracks" in this region from 1950 on.[1] As the growing Mexicano population subsumed old Anglo sections, the younger, more prosperous Anglos built new sections to move away from the encroaching Mexicanos. New subdivisions have been added to both the Mexican and Anglo "sides" of town, and these are exclusively ethnic subdivisions. Although no attempt was made to replicate this study in North Town, the same residential pattern became obvious as the research staff learned where several hundred local residents lived.

In a strict physical sense, comtemporary North Town had no exclusive Mexican and Anglo sections, but an integrated housing pattern did not exist. The Anglos have several new Anglo subdivisions which retain their ethnic enclave. However, the main central area and several new areas were gradually changing. Two of the new Anglo subdivisions contained several middle income Mexican families, a teacher, a federal employee and a furniture store owner. Several of the old Anglo sections of town have also become predominantly Mexicano.

In short, physically, the housing pattern of North Town has changed rather significantly, but socially, the racial separation is still intact. The mixed neighborhoods did not function as neighborhoods, and those Mexicanos who haved moved across the tracks often "go back" to "Mexican Town" to socialize with their relatives there. More important, the leading Mexicanos and Anglos in their respective communities did not live near each other. Each side of town tended to have a section where their respective "elite" reside, which most residents easily identified. This was, however, somewhat less true for Mexicanos, and their growing middle class was dispersed in several different areas.

Churches in North Town

During the post-war period, local Anglos also began adapting in other institutional areas. The Protestant churches, although still largely segregated, began consciously to adopt a more conciliatory, helping posture. Before discussing specific cases, however, it is important to describe the basic difference between the Baptist and Methodist churches' administrative and financial relationship to the Mexican missionary churches. The Methodist administrative and financial organization for the region, the conference, is a highly centralized state and national organization. The conference, not unlike the regional hierarchy of the Catholic Church, collects and reallocates donations from all local parishes. They also recruit, train and assign their ministers to local churches, with the approval of a local parish. Generally, the local parish has autonomy over its daily operations, but the minister is also directly responsible to his conference. Further, the Methodists are divided into a conference for the Anglos and a different one for the Mexicanos. The Mexicanos, unlike the blacks, did not vote to abolish their separate conferences during the mid-sixties. They have their own ministers, district administrators and parishes that are supported from an independent fund for their conference. Although they are under the same bishop as the local Anglos, they are basically independent from the local Anglo Methodist deacons and minister.

The Baptists, however, have a much more decentralized regional administrative and financial arrangement and they have no separate Anglo and Mexicano conferences. Each local Baptist church receives very little financial support from its regional and national organization, and it has a great deal of autonomy in selecting its minister. Qualified ministerial candidates "try out" i.e., preach and interview, and the local board has complete control over who they hire and how much they will pay. Further, the local Anglo Baptist church is primarily responsible for any Mexican Baptist church that exists. Such churches are missions of a given local Anglo Baptist parish. The Anglo board of deacons selects the minister and handles the general finance and operations of these missions. Further, they often hire an assistant Mexicano pastor who works among the Mexicanos and encourages them to attend Sunday school and church with the Anglos. In either case, the local Anglo Baptists have a good deal more direct control over the Mexicanos than the local Anglo Methodists.

Historically, North Town Anglo churches, individual members, and some ministers have increasingly attempted to aid Protestant Mexicanos through various programs. In North Town the Methodists have substantially supplemented building funds for the Mexicano parsonage in 1944 and their chapel in 1950.[2] An ex-missionary teacher from a prominent Anglo Methodist family also started a kindergarten which was active from 1952 to 1965. The Anglo Methodists also established a scholarship fund which sent four Mexicanos through college from 1960 to 1972.[3] Finally, they currently supplemented the local Mexicano pastor's monthly salary of $350 by $100 a month, and several prominent families have frequently given furniture and clothing to needy Mexicano Methodists. Although the minister can be a significant leader in such efforts, such aid continues as ministers come and go. Such examples of missionary aid are part of a tradition of paternalistic assistance through the church. Key local Anglo families were the prime movers behind such efforts. They reflected a general acceptance among the parishioners to "be neighborly and help their fellow Mexican brethren." Some Anglos grumbled about such "welfarism," but most rationalized it within the ideals of neighborliness and Christian charity.

There have also been conspicuous individuals who have attempted to promote new ideas about racial equality and integration. One prominent community leader, a staunch Baptist, was notable in his efforts to attract Mexicanos to the Anglo Baptist church. He was noted for attending the Catholic mass and the Baptist services, an effort perceived as an attempt to bridge the gap between Anglos and Mexicanos. He also promoted the Anglo church and Sunday school. An Anglo female Methodist missionary teacher was also noted for her commitment to improve the educational and social conditions of the Mexicano. Mexicanos described her as "different," a well-liked Anglo who lived and worked among them like no other local Anglo. She frequently helped local Mexicano families find economic aid to solve their personal problems, and she ran a well-attended kindergarten school for many years.

More recently, some Protestant ministers have initiated new ideas and programs to bring Mexicanos and Anglos together. The local North Town Methodist minister has attempted to work quietly with the more liberal Anglos in his parish to "build bridges" in the community. This has included attempts to have inter-racial youth recreational groups, a common Easter service, and increasing aid to the local Mexican parish. He has also preached several sermons that directly deal with the question of racial equality and the Christian ethic. In spite of these activities and individuals, it is difficult to argue that religious institutions have played a very central role in changing ethnic relations. The

Protestant churches, which include over half the Anglo families and nearly all of the Anglo churchgoers, are still segregated. Most local residents are quick to point out that religion is "less important to people nowadays" and that the church has "failed to bring the community together."

Schools in North Town

Schools in North Town and the attitudes of many Mexicanos towards school also began changing during this era, but not without increasing confrontations. In the thirties only a handful of Mexicanos went to high school. Apparently, they literally had to fight their way across the tracks against Anglo kids, who were waiting for them with rocks and bricks. About these incidents, an old woman who had ten children and who sent most of them to high school, reflected:

> We Mexicanos had to fight for everything we ever had, even the right to go to school. Los pendejos (the stupid) gringos would throw rocks at our children so that they didn't go to school. Now the gringos want us to forget everything and not hate them. They think that after the old people die off, that the new generation will not know about these things that they did to us in the past. But they are mistaken: for we shall tell our grandchildren and our greatgrandchildren what happened to us and they will know about it. We shall never forget.

In the forties more Mexicanos went to high school. One Mexicano reports that the first groups of Mexicanos who went to high school were supposed to sit in the hallway and not inside the classroom, so as not to mix with the Anglos. Later on, they were allowed inside the classrooms but would sit in the back, apart from the rest of the whites. A woman who went to high school in the rancho describes her schooling:

> We were only six Mexicanos in my class. Most families could not send their kids to high school because it cost a lot of money, like for books, clothes, etc. We Mexicano students did not participate in anything like clubs, and were not represented in anything like being class officers, queens, sweethearts, you know, all that stuff kids like so much. Well, to belong to any club or to vote in the class, one had to pay a fee. That really was a problem, our families were already making a big sacrifice by sending us to high school, we couldn't afford the extra costs. Besides, the gringos didn't make bones about showing their dislike for us, they snubbed us at all times. We were not wanted there, we were a minority. So we just stuck together and survived as best as we could. Many would just drop out because they couldn't bear the situation. It was my children's generation that started to change all this. Blessed they be.

The Mexicano enrollments beyond the sixth grade were still very small during this period. Local enrollment records were not available, and the state records were not broken down by ethnic group. However, older teachers and administrators estimated that up to eighty percent of the Mexican-American children dropped out of school by the sixth or seventh grade. A study of the migration and advanced education of local high school graduates from the 1930's to 1974 revealed a very small percentage of Mexicano graduates until the 1950's. Even in 1939 Mexicanos were only seven percent of the graduating seniors, increasing to twenty percent in 1949 and fifty percent in 1959. Considering that Mexicanos were nearly seventy percent of the local population, this illustrates how little schools promoted the occupational advancement of Mexican Americans during this era. But even raw attendance figures do not capture the educational dilemma of earlier generations of Mexicanos. During this era perhaps more than sixty-five percent of the families were migrant farm workers who participated in the previously described Western and Northern migrations. Their children invariably missed three or four months of school in April and May and again during September and October. Several excellent studies of the general neglect of education for the Mexican American in the Southwest describe these same conditions that existed in North Town.[4]

In spite of these limited educational opportunities, they had positive views of their segregated, physically run down "Mexican School." Most old students had ambivalent feelings about the segregated schooling they experienced. Not infrequently, they had felt humiliated by the Anglo discriminatory practices. Yet, they had more control over "their" school and avoided being compared to "superior" Anglo children in the classroom. The Mexicano children were among equals and did not have to prove anything to the white children from the other side of town. A fifty-year old woman described how the parents were organized around school issues in those days:

> All the parents did something to help the school and their children. We were united. Before the school was integrated with Anglo school, we had a lot of parties organized by the parents. We had dances like _jarabes_, and games, like bingo and _jamaicas_. _Las fiestas_ were organized in order to get money for our school. We did all those things for our children. If the classrooms needed curtains, then we'd make fiestas to collect money and get them the curtains. It was like this.

There was an active Club of Mexican parents and Anglo teachers. The parents seemed to feel at ease about going to school. The older parents who went to the school to talk with the teachers about their children, say that they were well received by teachers. It was after children had to go across the tracks to the Anglo school that more problems began to arise. One local theory was that Mexicanos received a fair education in the Mexicano school because their Anglo teachers competed with the teachers in the "good" Anglo school. However, when children were put in a classroom with Anglo children, the Mexicano children often felt a sense of inferiority. A thirty-five year old woman reports on how she felt at the Anglo school:

> Well, the teacher would ask the other kids what their parents did for a living. Then, the Anglo children would say: 'Mine is a doctor,' or 'Mine owns land; has a big *rancho*,' and so forth. She'd never ask me anything, but if she did, I'd be embarrassed to say: 'Mine works in the field, (es un pobre trabajador). I wanted to feel proud of my family and my *papá*, but was not able to among these children. I felt very stupid and was told I was a slow learner. I dropped out of 8th grade because I felt I just couldn't go on studying, that I didn't have enough brains.

The view that girls did not need as much schooling as boys was still held by many parents. According to many of the women, the girls went through school mainly because they wanted to, but the parents usually gave them little argument if they decided to drop out. A woman's place was in the home, anyway, so it was all right for the girls to help their mothers with household chores. They were to learn how to be good wives and mothers, since that was their destiny. The parents of some boys also felt that school wasn't really preparing them for life. An elderly man reported that when he expressed his desire to go to college, his father, who was a carpenter, asked him, "Are you going to learn a trade in college? Are they going to teach you how to work with your hands? If not, what good is it to spend all that money on college? What use will you make with that education?" Such views were very common among Mexicanos prior to World War II.

Others often expressed that they did not learn anything useful in school anyway. Most told stories about the effect of migrating. In the fall they would come back when classes were already in progress. They would always feel stupid because they could not keep up with the other kids. When they got to ninth grade they were too old for the class so they decided to drop out. In retrospect, most older Mexican Americans felt that their attitude towards school was "foolish." Thinking that school was not very good preparation for earning a living is now seen as "immaturity" and "impatience."

In spite of low enrollment and high dropouts, after 1940 Mexicano views of schools and schooling began to change, and Mexicanos began staying in schools and pushing for improved educational opportunities.[5] The major change for most youngsters in the new colonia was, in fact, just going to school. On the rancho many Mexicanos assumed that they were not able to compete with the Anglos. School was something they could not afford, and were not interested in, something that was irrelevant to their way of life. But in the colonia this way of life and their aspirations began to change. Not all parents were enthusiastic about sending their children to school, but the attitude of this Mexican was typical:

> I saw to it that all my ten children went to school. We made a lot of sacrifices in order to keep them in school. For the clothes, materials, books, etc. cost money which we didn't have much of. I used to get up at three or four in the morning in order to iron their school clothes and get their breakfast ready. I wanted them to go always clean and well dressed to school so that they wouldn't be ashamed of themselves or of their mother. These two rooms that you see empty now, in those days were filled with beds. At five in the morning I would start waking them up to get ready to go. They grumbled and complained but they generally liked school, enjoyed learning new things.

Another woman reports, however, that her parents did not really encourage her to go to school, but she persevered on her own. For the most part the attitude of parents seemed to be like this, "if you want to go to school, *mi hija, bien* (my child, that is O.K.); if you don't, *también está bien* (also that is O.K.)." Usually, the more upwardly mobile Mexicanos, the ambitious offspring of the local entrepreneurs and businessmen, were the first to go to the Anglo schools and the first to graduate from high school.

Historically, the schools had an informal policy of allowing the "better" Mexicans to send their children to the Anglo school. Several prominent businessmen listed the names of the ten to twenty of the most wealthy and influential Mexicano families as pupils in the Anglo schools in the fifties and early sixties. Often these families spoke both English and Spanish in the homes and were anxious for their children to compete with the Anglos in high school. They reasoned that the greater exposure to English and early competition with Anglos would prepare their children for high school and even college. Anglos generally made these exceptions without serious reservations or complaints, and apparently most Mexicanos accepted these policies. Those who left the Mexicano community to go to school with the Anglos experienced a certain amount of envy and kidding about becoming muy agringado, but this creation of a small Anglo-school educated group was apparently accepted.

Gradually, North Town Mexicanos in general began expecting their children to go to school for a longer time. Many middle-aged Mexican-Americans indicated that eventually their people came to expect their children to finish not only grade school but also high school. Further, the well-to-do Mexicanos of the fifties began sending their children to junior college and business or trade school. The survey of high school graduates clearly shows this trend developed in the fifties.[6] By the late sixties the norm had shifted from finishing high school to finishing college, and sixty percent of the Aztlán City Mexicano seniors and fifty percent of the North Town seniors expressed a desire and plans to go to college. This increasing interest in schooling and higher credentials reflects more than a rise in the aspirations of "ambitious individuals." The Mexicanos as a group were beginning to adapt to local conditions, utilizing education as a means for self-improvement.

Nearly all of the migrant workers clearly sensed that their way of life was declining by the fifties. They spoke of getting education for their children so they could "compete with the gringos." They realized that there were very few local opportunities outside the limited business settings already mentioned. The survival strategy of many families involved education and migration to the cities is reflected in the high outmigration rates of high school graduates.

The changes in the Mexicanos' expectations for schooling made education the major public issue. Poor school facilities, discriminatory retentions, and language policies became political issues. The early North Town LULAC organizations were critical of the schools. In 1960 the North Town LULAC began electing candidates to the local school board, and their major objective was to get a new school for the Mexicanos. By 1964 they had passed a bond issue and built a modern air-conditioned elementary school to replace the old Mexicano school. They had also instituted a freedom-of-choice plan, which allowed Mexicanos to go to the Anglo school, if they wished. The North Town schools were not fully desegregated until 1969.

One of the first effects of desegregation was to destroy the Mexicano Parent-Teachers Club. According to several Mexicano leaders, when Anglos began attending their meetings discord developed. One former member described the situation:

> One could cut the air of resentment with a knife at that first meeting with the Anglos. Our Mexican president started to tell about the PTC, what we had been doing in the past and so forth. Una Mexicana pendeja (one stupid Mexicana) interrupted him to ask that Miss so-and-so, a gringa who was the visiting teacher, speak in his place. This gringa used to go from house to house butting into the life of the Mexicanos with the excuse that she was trying to help. The president let her speak. She said that Mexicano children needed everyone's help because they were very poor and had no shoes to go to school. She implied that the reason they didn't have shoes to go to school was because their parents were drunks who could not support the family. I was fed up with all those offenses. I got up and interrupted her to say that if children didn't have shoes to go to school it wasn't because the parents were drunk but because the parents didn't receive decent wages from their Anglo patrones. That outraged the Anglo parents as well as the teacher who burst into tears. Right there and then, we were split and the PTC never met again.

Another immediate consequence of the racial mixing was that Mexicano children were automatically transferred from level A (high academic section) to level B in their classes. This was done so that even slow Anglos could occupy level A. When some Mexicano parents went to the school to protest, the administration apparently said that the Mexicanos would not suffer from any change in the quality of their education. But many parents were not convinced, and they became increasingly suspicious of the Anglo administration.

Speaking Spanish became strictly forbidden. It was forbidden in the past, but most older Mexicanos remember being able to use Spanish with each other rather frequently. Leaders of this era remembered that they were punished quite severely if caught talking in Spanish even during recess. Although it is difficult to verify from the personal reports and the school records, it appears that Anglos began tightening up the standards for retention and language use during the fifties. Several of the older teachers and students claimed that Spanish was used more freely on the grounds and in the classrooms from 1930 to 1940 than during the fifties. This more lax policy towards Spanish was a continuation of the practices used in the rancho schools, and as one teacher said,

> It didn't make much difference then, the Mexicans weren't going to be anything but croppers anyway. I didn't worry much about them learning English, I figured most of them would go back to Mexico. Anyway, they were happy at doing their work, so I didn't see that they would need much English.

During these pre-war years the Mexicanos were not a political or economic threat to the Anglos. But as they became more independent of Anglos and began ascribing to themselves new societal roles, this new aggressiveness could be seen in the informal life of the schools. By the mid-fifties the Mexicos were becoming the majority even in high school, and at least a small percentage of them were able to compete academically and athletically with Anglo children. Retention rates had always been high. One Mexicano described how it was in the elementary school:

> We used to have a joke about what grade you are in. Somebody would say, 'what grade you in?' You would say, 'Zero bola con la bola,' meaning you were stuck in low zero and had not passed on to high zero. In other words, they had all these goddamn grades, see. First you were in grade one, then you'd flunk or get passed to high grade one, see, because you were in low grade one before, they said. Then you'd go through low grade two and high grade two. By the time you got to junior high most of us were 16, so we dropped out, man, we were always zero bola con la bola in those days.

Undoubtedly, the rules were always strict about passing, and most Mexicanos in the old days also described being held back. But in the fifties, the Anglos were forced to devise better rationales for grouping and segregating Mexicanos from Anglos. In North Town they were able to get the Texas Education Agency to accept a plan to include at least ten to twelve Anglos in each elementary class with approximately twenty Mexicanos. The remaining 150 Mexicanos would be placed in all-Mexicano classes. The idea was that for their social adjustment Anglo children had the right to be with their own kind and not isolated or slowed down. The school district used such grouping devices, generally based on achievement scores and teacher recommendations.[7] Only the top Mexicano students were placed with Anglos. In high school the Mexicanos were strongly encouraged to take a vocational course while virtually all the Anglos were college preparatory and in classes where they were the numerical majority. To rationalize and reinforce this new form of stratification, the school teachers of the fifties and early sixties had to be tough.

The retention rates were high, and the Mexicano was reminded through tough grades and strict bans on language that he was in the track where he should be.

Many Mexicano students remember their teachers as this eloquent ex-student, who now runs his own small business, does:

> All I can remember about my teachers is them being on my back. It was always 'you Mexican this and you Mexicans that.' I'll admit that I wasn't the best student. I didn't burn no midnight oil. I had a good time in school, but those teachers always had to put us in our place. They always had to make us think we were dumb Mexicans. I know they used to flunk us on purpose. We never got the breaks. They were always getting us with grades. Mrs. _____ liked to read the scores out loud so she could show how we all got the poor grades. They also go on you for talking Spanish anywhere. I got put down for that lots of times. They wanted to make us feel bad, and they did, I guess.

Others invariably mentioned athletics and school honors as areas where they were discriminated against. In athletics the Mexicanos tended to excel in baseball, and the Anglos tended to excel in football. When Mexicanos did play football, apparently they were used mainly in the line on defense. Few Mexicanos were in the key leadership or offensive positions. This pattern can be seen in the school annuals, and most ex-players testify bitterly that they were deprived of some extra glory in sports. Many Mexicanos claim that the Anglo coaches tended to give in and play the rich Anglo's son over the Mexicano. Older Mexicanos complained that particularly the Anglos of prominent families got away with more disobedience and were more frequently given the favored assignments, seats, positions, schedules, and helpers' jobs. The Anglos' small privileges and relative immunity to disciplinary action were sore points that Mexicanos simply accepted. There were no Mexicano teachers and principals to act as advocates.

There were also stories of how Anglo teachers and administrators created ways to retain the privileges of the shrinking minority of Anglo students. They created a Señor and señorita North Town High to go along with Mr. and Miss North High. This preserved the Anglo award by making an ethnic distinction. The cheerleaders and twirlers were also chosen by either the faculty or by "an outside school/cheerleading clinic." Minimum grade limits were also set, which excluded many of the more academically marginal Mexicanos. A school activity fee of a dollar and fifty cents, in effect a poll tax, was also set as a voting prerequisite. In short, there were a great many ingenious schemes to help preserve the privilege of the Anglo minority. In the area of schooling, North Town Anglos, from 1930 to the early 1960's, were not accommodating to the growing demands of Mexicanos.

Other Community Institutions and Agencies

Other major civic organizations and clubs such as the Rotary and the Chamber of Commerce remained, however, almost exclusively Anglo. From 1930 to early 1960 there were virtually no Mexicanos invited to be a part of these organizations. Mexicanos were also noticeably absent from several civic projects such as building a local hospital, improving the local library, and celebrating the county centennial. These were all-Anglo affairs. Although a Mexicano middle class had developed, leadership roles, as in the case of the high school, were for Anglos only. Likewise, the local papers continued to report primarily Anglo social events and personal items. Perhaps the major change in the newspapers was the increasing use of words such as Latin American or Spanish American or Latin instead of "Mexican man" and "Mexican Town."[8] The symbolism of American (i.e., Anglo) vs. Mexicano was changing to a more hyphenated symbol for the "ethnic American."

Generally, however, civic activities remained exclusive or segregated. This trend even existed in children's programs for scouting and for little league baseball. There were Mexicano packs and teams and Anglo packs and teams. Several Mexicano scout leaders complained that they always got the old bats and balls and that their packs could not use the school buildings as easily as Anglo packs could. Again, the social fabric of daily life, the old society and its privileges were dying hard, despite the profound economic transformations and the growing political challenge. In some ways, Anglos, in 1960, were fighting to retain these social symbols of their power in the community and in the schools. Conversely, Anglo civic leaders pointed with pride to their improvement projects such as the private county hospital and the public library. They expressed strong feelings that these projects were "for the Mexicans, too, even though some did not appreciate them."

Life in La Colonia and the Mexican Family

As the Mexicanos moved to la colonia in the 1920's and 1930's they began creating an urban community. Compared to the rancho the colonia of North Town had a variety of local institutions and organizations. There were new occupations such as selling lena (firewood), and working at the gin, the feed mill and the canning plant. More women began working as maids and kitchen workers in the restaurants. The majority of people began joining the western and northern migrant streams, and a rather different way of life developed. In the market towns the Mexicanos also had their own church and plaza, a Mexican grade school and parent-teacher clubs, Benito Juarez and Miguel Hidalgo mutualistas (mutual-aid) societies, and many new recreational spots. As the towns grew, the cantinas, dance halls, and grocery stores also prospered.

Many of these second generation Mexicanos were able to buy large lots, often entire blocks, when they moved from the ranchos. La colonia generally had a number of smaller sub-units called barrios. In early times, these hamlets were largely made up of one's extended family. In one plot the family would build the "maternal house" for the nuclear family. The surrounding plots were reserved for the children. The majority of families were centered around the male family heads. As male children married, they settled on the lots of their father or grandfather, but a substantial number of the third generation children also settled around the wives' parents.[9] Where a new couple lived depended upon which family could give them a lot for their house. If possible, most women preferred to remain close to their families after marriage.

Most people considered their barrio to include approximately one or two blocks surrounding their houses. Many of their barrio mates were relatives, although other new, smaller families also settled near the large extended families. Thus the community was formed around the family which continued to be the central economic and social focus of life. In the family, one could find refuge, the solace and the care that nobody expects from outsiders. Even one's closest friends were often siblings or first cousins. The shape and organization of neighborhoods are recalled today by old timers with a great deal of nostalgia:

> There wasn't too many disgustos (conflicts) with your neighbors as you see today. Neighbors were like part of your family, even if not related by blood. There was more caring, more sharing. If a family had two slaughtered venison, for instance, that was a lot of meat and they shared it with their neighbors. Besides, people were more willing to help each other without even being asked.

Even though the barrio was sparsely populated, people did not isolate themselves from their relatives and neighbors. All of the older Mexicanos who grew up in the colonia talk about the solidarity that existed in the neighborhoods. When children walked to school, for instance, a mother would feel safe about her children going alone. She knew that her children were being watched by every woman who lived between her house and the school. If anything happened to the child, a neighbor woman, whether related to her or not, would come to her child's aid or call her. Everybody knew who the children belonged to and a system of mutual care for the children of the barrio was informally established.

The older Mexicanos described how women from the neighborhood would drop by early in the morning every day in order to chat awhile with their mothers. Their doors were always open in order to encourage people to come in. Everyone was given el pase (permission to come in). Neighbors also exchanged a good deal of household help during the early days of the colonia. When a woman gave birth, the neighbors did all the housework without expecting any pay. When someone was sick either the neighbors or the mutualistas took up a collection to help him, and women in the neighborhood helped in any way possible. During the migration numerous work-exchange and sharing patterns were necessary. One often rode with his neighbors. Those that stayed behind, the elderly, the very young, and the non-migrant, watched their neighbors' houses, and cared for their relatives, plants, and animals. Visiting patterns were also much more extensive in those days. When someone arrived there was always food and drink. Most old-timers remember their neighborhoods as very real and active social groups. Some mentioned "bad" or "nosey" neighbors, but the emphasis was necessarily much more on cooperation and exchange to survive. Life during the thirties was particularly hard, and the migrations demanded a more collective and familial approach to life.

Socio-economic conditions in the colonia were often no better than the rancho. The Mexicanos of this period were generally poor, and living conditions were harsh by modern standards. Most families had anorias (wells), but there were also some public faucets for neighborhoods. It was women's work to go to the faucet to gather water for the household. There was always a small line of people to get water, but during washing days one could find people at the faucet until midnight. Washing clothes was an exhausting endeavor. But it usually brought together sisters and comadres in a common effort. First, they had to boil a great portion of water in a big tub in the backyard. Dirty clothes were rinsed, wrung out and hung in the sun. Surprisingly, many women liked the work because they could be with other women in the family, talking and joking with each other. For a long time, most houses did not have utilities inside, thus the cooking would also be done out in the yard, as in the rancho days.

Most of the families that progressed and acquired some independence from the local Anglo patrones, were characterized by a great degree of cooperation and a willingness to pursue many different kinds of labor. One Senora told her story like this:

> My father was a quartero in the rancho. We all helped him in la labor (field work). The whole family worked and my mother stayed home. She had her work too. She would prepare the meat, salt and dry it so that we would always have a fresh supply of meat. She canned food, sewed for the whole family and kept our small house spotless. Then my father bought a little plot in North Town. He himself built the house which is still standing, it is not far from here. Mi padre santo (my saintly father) never lacked anything. He bought the plot near the escuelita (school) so that we children could go to school by foot. While he continued going to the rancho to work, my mother raised chickens and turkeys at home. Later on, after many of us were already married, my father decided to become part of crews and moved to another town where he could find more of that kind of jobs. Then he'd work everywhere in these two counties.

In town more diverse opportunities existed to improve one's life conditions. Everyone in the family did some kind of labor that would increase the family funds. Some people went to the monte (brushy fields) and gathered wood to sell in town. People would haul wood by wagon loads to the courthouse, the houses, and the stores. Each wagon load was worth from two to seven dollars. People also continued to raise chickens and pigs in their backyards to sell or to use as food. Eventually, however, a city ordinance (1935) declared it unsanitary, taking this source of income from many families. People also raised corn, took it to the mill to be ground, and then made bread and tortillas out of the dough. Other men set traps on the river in order to catch raccoons, and they sold the fur at the stores in town. Others would kill birds to put in the soup. There was also an ice plant and later a factory that made animal feed, using about thirty to forty people and paying two dollars a day for a ten-hour working day. That was an improvement over the one dollar a day they got on the ranches. Women would also cook *tamales* by the thousands and set up *puestos* (stalls) under the mesquite trees in town in order to sell their tamales to shoppers from the *ranchos*.

Further, whereas in the *ranchos* no one collected Social Security, such federal programs became available in the *colonia*. People began relying upon and planning for them. For example, one lady was so interested in guaranteeing her Social Security income that she went to work as a maid and babysitter for an Anglo family. She earned nineteen dollars a week for the work but apparently had to pay twenty dollars to a woman who took care of her own children. Even though she was making no money, she persisted because she thought that Social Security would help her in the future. Several other women of this era expressed similar feelings about planning ahead with Social Security. In addition, most Mexicanos who worked in migrant crews gained Social Security benefits by the 1940's.

During the thirties and forties the traditional customs and practices of the Mexicano appear to have been substantially intact. Unlike other European immigrants, the second generation Mexicano retained a great deal of their language and customs. Many Mexicanos in their late forties and fifties who grew up in the *colonias* during the 1930 to 1940 decade speak only very basic English. Few went to school, and their contact with the English speaking world was very minimal. They also spoke the Spanish used in rural Mexico con cariño (affectionately) and con respeto (more polite, indirect, and with respect). Mexicanos of this generation also retained many of the traditional hospitality patterns, and one cannot go into an older Mexicano's house without being offered the best food and drink they have.

Many of the traditional family practices and neighborhood patterns found in the Hispanized, Catholic Mexican settlements of northern and central Mexico survived in second and third generation North Town Mexicanos. As in the rancho, the nuclear family was characterized by the presence of a husband and father who formally was the head of the household. As the main provider for his family, he made the decisions about money. The wife and mother played an important role as partner in raising the family. She not only helped the husband provide for the family, but also took care of the children and saw that they went to school and did their homework. She also instructed them in religious matters, customs, and manners. She ran the household with her daughters who would help dust and mop, make the beds, wash and iron clothes, and cook. The boys would be expected to help the fathers at work and when needed,to fix things in the house.

Although the father was affectionate and in many families tried to be as close to his children as possible, the wife generally did not expect him to do "her" chores concerning the care of children. One wife described this common feeling:

> My husband doesn't even know how to change diapers. If he would be left alone to care for the children, he wouldn't know what to do. He doesn't even like to help them go to the bathroom. But then I don't expect him to do things like that. However, when children are sick he'll stay up all night long looking over them. He is a concerned father who loves his children very much.

The way a husband showed that he cared for his family was by providing for them in the best possible way. He had to bring in as much income as possible, show an interest in bettering the house, buy new furniture, and save money for the children's future. Only the younger, more modern Mexicanas expressed a desire to have their husbands help with household chores or child care. All the older (fifty to seventy years) Mexicanas expressed little doubt about what their role was as a wife and mother and what the male role was as a father and husband. They seldom questioned their roles and apparently seldom felt unduly burdened. Disciplining children was done by the mother, mainly because she was in closer contact with them. The husband would only take over when the child was being too rebellious, or when he thought that his wife was being too "soft" with them.

Thus, continuing the traditions of the rancho days, the man was recognized family head. The woman typically followed his dictates, but she also had her own reserve of authority and power. The authority of the woman in family affairs took on new subtleties in the colonia. Women whose husbands were upwardly mobile, successful entrepreneurs became free from field work outside the home and continued to be in full charge of the household. Their husbands wanted a wife who took care of the house and children and who acknowledged his power by never making key decisions without consulting him first. The wife of a successful merchant described how it worked in her home:

> I take care of the house for my husband couldn't do it. It is not only that he doesn't have the time but also that he wouldn't know how to do it. A woman is faster at home chores and more organized. I discipline the children and watch over them. When children want to do something, they come and ask my permission first. Even if I let them do what they want I tell them that I need to ask for their *papá*'s permission for something. He looks at me, kind of tired from work, and asks: "What is your opinion?" I tell him what I think and he says, "It is all right with me then."

His role was to legitimize her authority, but informally, she often held much of the decision-making authority in family affairs. She rarely made important final decisions without consulting him, and the reverse was equally true in most stable families. Mutuality, then, was the common pattern.

The mother continued to hold a central role in the family. Even in the stable, male-headed families, she recognized herself as someone "special." Being a mother is being someone important and beautiful. That was expressed vividly by an older woman when she reacted to her son's words. He had just said something to the effect that she was only a woman. She immediately perked up and said: "*No soy solamente una mujer: soy tu madre!*" I am not only a woman, I am your mother). In effect she was saying that he had to listen to her or do what she was saying, even though he was a grown, married man. Her opinions were almost sacred because she was his mother. It did not matter how cruel or how uncaring the mother may have been, she was still the mother. No one could replace her. Stepmothers were generally distrusted, and stereotype of the "jealous" new wife who resents her husband's children was frequently mentioned. Being an orphan was the ultimate curse. "There is no one like a mother to take care of a child," was the refrain of old and young alike. The only one who could substitute for her is perhaps the grandmother. Thus the woman may be characterized as the anchor of the household, and the man as the ship that will either take them places, loll in the same port forever, or leave them behind.

In order to fulfill herself as a human being, a woman had to get married and bear children. Women who remained single after twenty-five were considered spinsters; if they retained their reputation as serious women who do not run around with men, they were respected within the family and the community. They usually continued to live at their parents' homes or in the case of their parents' death, with a married sibling. She then becomes like an extra mother to her sibling's children.

Married women often expressed the fact that they cherish having a large family and thoroughly enjoyed their children. Children were not viewed as an embarrassment or a burden. When couples went to a party, visiting, or even to an occasional movie, children were supposed to tag along. One old woman explained, "If I was invited to go to a party and the children weren't to come with me, I wouldn't go. I would only go to places where I could take all my eight children with me." For the Mexicano family the children were their wealth. Large families (seven to twelve children) were the rule. It was not until the fifties that a family planning clinic opened in the area. Until that time, women had no real information on birth control. Most women continued to bear children as long as they were capable. Cases of women having a child at the same time as one of their married daughters was still fairly common in the colonia.

The family continued to play a crucial role in the socialization of children, even after most children went to school and catechism class.Within the family, as well as with other people, there was a great deal of respeto (respect), especially from children,towards elders. Kindness and consideration towards one another were strictly valued and enforced. Of course, people were not always cheerful and goodhearted, but nearly everyone emphasized that all behavior had to be infused with respeto, respect for compadres and comadres, for elders, for neighbors, for patrones and for teachers. The respect that children were to show for elders was reflected in certain acts, e.g., young people could not smoke or drink liquor in front of elders, especially parents and grandparents.

Young couples during courtship could not demonstrate affection by holding hands, much less kissing or embracing, in front of their elders. A woman remembers that when she was dating her husband, they would come from school together holding hands, but when they passed in front of a relative's house they would be discreetly apart. To continue holding hands and allow an aunt or an older brother to see such behavior was to show lack of respect. Children knew they had to kiss their grandparents' hands upon seeing them and did so readily, without being told. Failure to do so would bring great disharmony, and the child's parents would be accused of not knowing how to raise a child properly. Although such formality is remembered with nostalgia, many women also recognized that such customs impeded them from having frank and intimate relationships with their own mothers.

Children were only allowed to interrupt adults' conversations for very important reasons. When the extended family ate together, adults and children would be given separate eating areas, usually adults inside the house and children outside. Often children were served after adults, eating whatever was left over. If adults had eaten all of a certain dish, children were not to complain about it or ask their mothers for that dish lest they embarrass their mother. A young woman recalls one time when she did such a thing to her mother:

> All my relatives sat down to eat before us children. My mother had fixed chicken mole, frijoles, rice, salad and fried potatoes. When the adults finished eating, she called us children to come in and eat. We sat down and I realized that there was no fried potatoes left. That was my favorite dish. I made a fuss, complaining out loud that people had left nothing for us to eat. My mother almost died of embarrassment. She took the people to the other room and told me: "I am going to fix you now." Then she started peeling a mountain of potatoes right there and to fry them. She made a pile of fried potatoes and put them in front of me, saying "Now you are going to eat everything so that never again you will complain about not having what to eat." I started eating but soon was full and there was still a lot of potatoes to eat. I cried saying I couldn't eat anymore and she simply said: "Go on eating, you are going to eat every single one of these potatoes." I begged my brothers to come help me eat but she wouldn't let them do that either. Never again I complained about food in front of other people. My lesson was well taught.

Shame as a form of discipline was used in some circumstances, when other adults, especially a godmother, were present. The child could be made to feel guilty for giving the mother a disgusto. Adults today remember hating the times they were scolded or spanked in front of an adult not belonging to the household, especially their godparents. Therefore, they--and their mothers--tried to keep those incidents to a minimum.

Harsh physical punishment was rarely used by most mothers. One woman said that her unmarried sister, who lived with them, was the one who most often disciplined her children, since she herself was too soft to do so. Women who were known to beat their children gained a reputation as uncaring and cold-hearted. Moreover, women had to watch their children closely, keeping them inside the family compound when they were playing. If the children were seen regularly wandering around unsupervised, people would suspect the woman of having a lover and thus unable to keep her children off the streets. To be uninterested in the welfare of children was a disgraceful thing on the rancho and in the colonia.

The Changing Mexicano Family

Despite a great deal of continuity in the organization and customs of the families in the colonia, the changing economic conditions placed new strains upon the Mexicano family system. The transient aspects of the local economy and the new opportunities opening up in other areas brought more separations and divisions within the extended and the nuclear family. Families slowly started to separate, not losing their importance and centrality within the community life, but still being diminished by each man who decided to try his luck in the Northern factories. All the people who grew up in the colonia had siblings living in California, Wisconsin, and West Texas. Many old women saw their children leave the warmth and protection of their houses to return only for occasional visits.

Moreover, life in the more urban market town placed many new pressures on every family. In the towns Mexicanos worked hard to pay for the new house, the new car, and all the material things they began to value in a semi-urban situation. Clothes became more important, since children had to go to school daily and show themselves decently to the outer world. They also needed outfits for school activities, for participating in the _dies y seis de Septiembre_ dances, shoes to wear daily in the summer and then in the winter. Life became much more demanding. Most families in the community responded to these new challenges with determination, using all their faculties to succeed, and rallying around their families for help and support. Other families did not fare so well and suffered new strains and problems.

During _rancho_ days, the social gatherings like _fiestas_, _bailes_ and games were basically family affairs. Relatively little social recreation existed outside the family. _Cantinas_, partly due to the "dry laws," did not exist. Men brewed their beer from home-grown maize or rice and drank at home with their _compadres_. But when _cantinas_ were allowed (1936), the pattern of staying home at night began to change for many family men. Several third generation women, contrasted to older Mexicanas, were bitter about _cantinas_ and the consequences they brought to their homes and lives. They contended that the incidence of such family problems has greatly increased. Yet, one can neither simply blame _cantinas_ and liquor, nor explain excessive male drinking with moralistic psychological arguments about the character weakness of Mexicanos. These were men who had struggled, often quite successfully, against the elements, and an unjust and uncooperative social, economic and political system. The great majority of

Mexicano males in the colonia reportedly remained strong, faithful providers.

Nevertheless, this new life had many frustrations, many forms of humiliation imposed by the white society. Rural Mexicanos had partially escaped such problems by staying in their "place" on the rancho. Men soon found out that the white side of town was restricted to them, that they could go there only at certain hours and for certain purposes. Women were allowed to come over to Anglo houses as servants, where some had to eat their lunch outside in the yard. Many Mexicanos did not want their wives to clean the Anglo houses. They continued to try to hold the traditional role of the sole provider and protector. But in some cases, the economic pressures were too great, and the Mexicano male with a working wife sometimes felt shame. The frustration of some males was expressed in long nights at the cantina getting drunk, missing work, beating their wives and finally deserting their family.

In rancho days, husband and wife needed each other to survive, because there were no outside sources of support. They needed each other for economic and social reasons. Without a family for whom to live and on whom to rely, a person was lost, was aimless. In some cases women in the colonia formally became head of the households where the male was absent. That situation, however, did not necessarily create a family "breakdown." Children of women without husbands did not always fit the stereotype of disturbed, aimless or weak personalities. These families did not particularly show signs of disaster, either financial or emotional. For every woman who se dejó (let herself slip), there was another who had faced up and overcome her family problems.

Women had traditionally been instructed to keep the family together at all costs. They had learned that the children would have to rely more on them than on anyone else, that they had an important role within the family circle, and that without them the household could turn into chaos. They considered themselves the basis for family well-being. Traditionally, women did depend on the male figure for legitimization of their authority and for some sense of strength and security. Every woman had either a husband or a brother or a father to go to in times of need. Nevertheless, the life histories of several deserted women reveal the remarkable strength of many Mexicanas forced into these circumstances. Many would fall back on their own integrity and attachment to the family ideal. They became closer to the children and more apt to take on the burdens of supporting a family. One woman who was deserted by her husband told her story.

When I got married, I was too young and knew nothing about sex. Right away I got pregnant and had children one after the other. My husband couldn't hold on to any job. We kep moving from ranch to ranch because he was always getting drunk and then fired by the rancheros. When I was pregnant with the sixth child, he started not to come home for days. One of my sisters-in-law told me he was having an affair. I went to talk to the woman he was seeing and begged her to leave him alone. She just said she hadn't known he was married, but she didn't stop seeing him. When I was about to have the baby he took off with this woman, leaving me with no money. The children and I had not been eating properly for months for lack of money. I sought refuge at my mother-in-law's house. She tried to help me, but she was also very poor so there were times when there wasn't enough food for me, since I wanted my children to eat first. When the baby was born she was very tiny, malnourished. She was very ill and fifteen days later I took her to the local doctor. He said she had to be hospitalized. I told him I had no money to pay for the hospital so he suggested that I ask at the courhouse if they could help me pay the hospital. Then I was told there was no available aid. The only thing would be to apply for welfare but it would take more than a week for the papers to be processed. I went home carrying the sick baby and she died in my arms. My first cousin and one of my brothers-in-law took care of the funeral for I had no money, not even to bury the child. Three months later, my husband returned. At that time I was on welfare and was beginning to feel better. I had rented a small house and the children were eating better. The older ones were going to the Methodist kindergarten. I was taking odd jobs as a cleaning maid at some Anglo houses. He asked me to reconcile and I accepted because of the children. I thought they needed their father. At the welfare, they told me I could only have two checks more while he looked for a job, but then the aid would be cut since my husband was with me again. He got a job, which was better paying, and we were doing well, except that his temperament was worse than ever. He didn't want to hear any mention of the dead baby. One day I had prepared flowers and candles to take to

> the angel's grave and had put them on the table. He came home in time to hear my oldest son urging me to hurry so that we could go to the cemetery right away. The man flew into a rage, threw the table on the floor, stepped on the candles and flowers. Then he grabbed me and started to beat me. My little children were the ones who interfered and made him stop. I guess it was his guilt, but what else could I do? He was guilty, and I could not relieve his conscience. Two days before Christmas, my husband disappeared again. He took off with my last welfare money and his paycheck, again leaving me totally penniless. He had gone away with the same woman. And again I was pregnant. Do you imagine what kind of Christmas I had that year? After Christmas, my mother-in-law came to ask me for his clothes: he was back but didn't want to come to the house. She was on my side but was so afriad of her son that she did whatever he told her to do. I told her that if he wanted his clothes, he had to come for them. Later, a male friend of his came to ask me for his clothes. I told him the same and the man, standing at my doorsteps, threatened to beat me if I didn't give him the clothes. I said I would defend myself as I could, but my husband had to come and face me if he wanted his clothes. So he came, filled with resentment. I told him that he owed me a child because he had killed my other one, but this baby that I was carrying would live. For that baby to be able to survive, our marriage was broken once and for all: I never wanted to see him again. And I didn't. From then on it was struggle, struggle, and struggle. Little by little I was able to save money and make a life for me and my children.

Today, this woman lives in a large house and her children are leaders in the high school. The older children received scholarships to college and have families of their own.

Another woman who was left alone with nine children was not successful in material terms, but she also did not break down when her husband left. Soon after she got married, she realized that her husband was not the "dependable type" that she had dreamed of for herself. Out of a sense of morality and shame, she remained with him as long as she could, taking abuse from him, e.g., frequent beatings and stealing of the money she was earning for the family. When he left her, she reports it was a "big relief." Now that her long lost husband wants to come back, and she is ready to fight against him.

> I don't want to see that cabrón in my house even in a picture. It is funny, now that the children are grown, married and taken care of, he suddenly becomes a loving father. Where was his love when we most needed it? My older son, however, is all excited about getting to know his father. He is willing to take him in his home. He even bought a new color TV. Now I ask you: 'Is this fair?' I told my son that if he lets that cabrón chingado live in his house, he is never going to see his mother again.

Because of increasing desertions by husbands, drunkenness, and romances with cantineras, women of this generation viewed marriage with a great deal of ambivalence, a mixture of desire and fear. On one hand, it was desirable and essential to get married to have stability and to become a mother of many children. To fail to do this was to fail as a woman. On the other hand, if a woman was well taken care of at home and had a warm, dependent relationship with her parents, leaving the security of the home for the uncertainties of married life was a big risk. The desire to have children, however, seemed to impel most women to marry.

> If I had known what marriage was all about I wouldn't have married. It was all pura batallar (struggle). But when I married, I didn't know any better, hadn't gone to school. Mi padrecito santo had supported all of us and I never even had to work with him. So until my husband's death I always lived in a rancho. When he died, I came to town, got the house and luckily got a job with las costuras (a relief program during the depression days) that enabled me to support my family. The older girls had to quit school and stay at home in order to take care of the younger ones while I worked. As soon as a child was old enough to get a job, he or she would drop out of school so as to help all of us. There was nobody for me to rely on but myself and my own children.

Women literally had to become a fortress, a solid wall against which all of her children could lean. And a fortress many of them became.

The woman of the colonia was supposed to be chaste, prudish, and therefore "nice." Women who took lovers, whether they were married or not were thoroughly despised by the other women. They had no sympathy for the "fallen woman." It was the mother's duty to teach chastity and fortitude to her daughters. Thus, an old woman proclaimed in a public meeting:

> La mamá es la reina de la casa, la hija es la princesa. (The mother is the queen of the house, the daughter is the princess). With her mother the daughter learns how to be a wife and a mother. She learns from her mother's verguenza (shame) and takes on the same qualities of meekness and softness that her mother has. The daughter is to be protected like a flower, like the precious jewel that she is.

A girl who became pregnant before marriage was a dejada. The ultimate accusation was "Ella se dejó" - she let herself slip. She was supposed to be a tower of fortitude, an example of chastity. Boys, as in any other cultural group in a sexist society often were not blamed. After all, they were men -- they were only seeking something they had a right to. If the girl gave in to him it was all her fault because it was her duty, and hers alone, to stay away from pre-marital sex. As an unmarried mother, she was an outcast.

> At least when women in the rancho had illegitimate babies, they had the decency to hide themselves, to stay home and not be seen by the other respectable people. They'd acknowledge their fall and take it. But that is past, women today do not have the same verguenza like women in the past.

Yet some women did have considerable compassion for unwed mothers and did not judge them harshly. They felt mainly for the children who were like outcasts; they hoped that these women would find husbands to protect them against men who consider them an "easy lay." Women who got pregnant before marrying most generally tried to marry the man who fathered the baby. If that did not work, then they started to look for another man. They were anxious to regain the respectability that was taken away from them, which guarantees them a place in society. Some women were very emphatic about condemning men who made women pregnant and then left them behind. A woman, with tears in her eyes, gave her opinion of such men:

> These men do not think of the children, of how much they are hurting their own children. Because of this, these men soil themselves and are not as dignified as they should be. I don't blame the poor girls because they are the ones who are left suffering the responsibility for the children. Women never abandon their children, they never do. Why can't men be the same way?

Women who lived alone were viewed with suspicion, unless they had already established an impeccable reputation. They also had a number of problems. For example, a motherless woman who was left childless by her husband went to live by herself in a house her father had given her only to find such a situation very difficult. Men kept coming to visit, thinking that she wanted some company. She had a job as a waitress but had to quit when the cook made sexual propositions to her. She was very frightened and consequently moved her house to her sister's backyard to feel safe. Later on, she got married to a respectable man, not out of love, but out of a need to be married to keep her virtue and her reputation intact. Many unwed mothers made marriages for convenience sake to somebody else. This "double-standard" in sex mores was bitterly resented by many women, especially by those who "gave in" to their lovers. A woman who was pregnant before marrying and then married her baby's father put the situation in these terms:

> See, the thing is like this: parents tell their daughters to not get into sex at the same time that they tell their sons to get into sex. In this little town, there are very few cantineras or whores to go around. So, who are left to be seduced by the manly boys? None but the gentle daughters of other people. In this way, parents themselves bring disaster to their own children. Take me, for instance: I knew nothing about sex. Then I started dating at thirteen and got pregnant at fourteen, and that was when my mother had a fit and almost threw me out of the house. But she had never warned me against sex or told me anything about men. I got into it almost blind, not knowing what I was doing. I was very bitter against my boyfriend for then I had to marry him in order not to disgrace myself and my baby. But I also had to quit school which really hurt me, since I wanted to finish high school so much.

Courship practices in the colonia also underwent a number of changes. In rancho days, courtship was so closely supervised and meetings so rare that women knew little about sex and seldom became pregnant. Most girls became women with little understanding of sexuality. One sixty-year old woman described her experience.

> I was eleven years old and was at school when another girl told me that I had blood stains all over my skirt. I was terrified and ran home but found no one since they were all at the *rancho* working. I kept cleaning myself, thainking I had somehow cut myself in there. When my mother arrived, I told her what was happening in between tears, but she said that from then on I would bleed like that every month for two or three days. She didn't say why, even though I asked her so. She gave me some rags to put on and that was all. In those times we used rags and used to get a lot of infections because of that. Then my breasts started to grow and I was very embarrassed. My mother had died by that time and I lived with my aunt. She didn't explain to me about the breasts either. I could not understand why women had to have breasts. So I got some rags and swaddled myself to make myself flat again.

In the *rancho*, girls had as companions mainly brothers and cousins. A girl would typically meet two or three boys of another family who lived nearby and would fall in love with the first one. Her "destiny" was to fall in love and marry. Love was not a matter of knowing somebody well and appreciating somebody's character, but a matter of economic survival. You had to marry and create an economic unit of your own, a little world for the future. Increasingly, however, the traditional customs of protecting and supervising women became more difficult to enforce. In the *colonia* young girls walked to school unescorted. They also had more opportunities to go out and to meet their boyfriends secretly. There were simply more people and more chances to fall in love. Girls went to dances with their older brothers or mother, but they also met their boyfriends after school or when they went out with their girl friends.

In general, these selected stories of families, marriages, and women illustrate the kinds of troubled adaptation that some Mexicanos have experienced in the South Texas setting. The examples are far from comprehensive, but they do suggest that the views of local Anglos, and even much of the scholarly writings on the Mexican-American family, are often overly negative caricatures. Such caricatures, when confronted with real cases of strong, successful families, with or without fathers, simply become untenable. Indeed, most Mexicano families, particularly fatherless families, underwent difficulties. It is equally important to underscore the price that a growing number of Mexicanos paid for adapting to American society.

Many Mexicano leaders expressed great personal concern for the high incidence of drinking and alcoholism.[10] Understandably, Mexicanas were nearly unanimous in their hatred for the cantinas. There was also increasing concern for the high incidence of separation and child desertion. Today, North Town has from 400 to 600 children of unwed or deserted mothers. Most older Mexicanos saw these problems as a development of greater Americanization. Increasingly, the Mexicano has failed in getting an education and in finding a steady, meaningful job during the 1950's and 1960's. The present rate of unemployment and underemployment was estimated as ten to twelve percent, but this appears to be a very conservative estimate.[11] The amount of welfare payments in these communities has risen dramatically in the sixties.[12] The present level of poverty as measured by health, education, income and housing was depressingly high. The Texas survey on poverty and various other demographic tables included portray this economic disparity and stagnation vividly.[13] In the face of these conditions, it is quite understandable that some Mexicanos have been unable to cope.

The new Chicano leaders also recognized and lamented the passing of many valued traditional practices. In general cultural terms, many changes have occurred particularly in the third and fourth generations. The language has developed into a separate Chicano dialect.[14] There was little knowledge of and no practice of traditional Indian or Mariachi music forms. Most present-day Mexicano houses were American style with separate bedrooms and suburban style lots. Family residence patterns, due to expensive and scarce lots and a massive out-migration, were much more nuclear. Moreover, women no longer automatically established their houses near their husbands' parents. Compadres (godparents) no longer have binding obligations to serve as coparents. Child-rearing and the relation of youth to their third and fourth generation parents have become increasingly Americanized, and the generation gap was very real for Mexicano students. The role of women has greatly changed. Weddings and family celebrations were more exclusive and were often held outside the homes in formal places like restaurants and clubs. Neighborhoods no longer served the same function of child-rearing and labor exchange that they once did. Second generation Mexicanos lamented the passing of, or gradual change of many customs and practices which sustained them in the struggle to survive. They worried about their youth becoming too Americanized, and many made real efforts to maintain their language and some of the more traditional hospitality patterns.

Given the vantage point of history, the third and fourth generation of North Town Mexicanos were clearly victims of a static, stagnating local economy. As a people, they had gone through two massive shifts in their way of life in sixty years, first, from sharecroppers to migrants, and second, from migrants to non-migrants. As a people, they had also not been passive and silent; consequently, many shifts in the power relationship between Anglos and Mexicanos have occurred.

A SUMMING UP: THE RELATIVE ORGANIZATION AND POWER OF THE COMPETING ETHNIC GROUPS

In the North Town colonia a growing middle class developed into a diversified, active, organized group of community leaders. Even by the twenties North Town had ten or twelve Mexicano merchants and from ten or fifteen labor contractors and truckers. During the early period, these two groups formed a new middle class. Until well into the fifties there were virtually no college-educated middle class Mexicanos. During the pre-war period, leadership in the Mexicano community was strictly based on business acumen and not formal education. The schools had largely excluded the Mexicanos, and their main source of mobility was through capital saved from sharecropping and migrating North. By the mid-fifties, there were several professionals like teachers and nurses beginning to return to this region. For example, the first Mexicano teacher came to North Town in 1955.

Mexicanos also began filling the lower level bureaucratic jobs in the city, schools, and post office from the late forties on.[15] Initially, Anglos hired the Mexicanos as county and city laborers and school janitors. In the forties Mexicanos were also used as night watchmen and assistants to the Anglo directors of utilities and the police. By the fifties there were Mexicano postmen, policemen, assistant directors of utilities, and chief clerks. There were still no Mexicanos in administrative positions at the school or bank or for the "big" local businesses (machinery, fertilizer, and chain stores). But there was a growing, stable, locally-based middle class of perhaps 100 to 150 Mexicanos for a Mexican population of 3,000 to 4,000. Many of these leading Mexicanos were active in civic programs such as scouting, the Sociedades, the PTA, and LULAC.

By the sixties the chain stores and the more progressive Anglo merchants also had begun encouraging this trend of a growing Mexicano middle class. By this period, there had emerged Mexicano managers in two North Town chain stores, a bank officer, and two postal clerks. There were also several Mexicano insurance officers and building contractors. In some cases the new Mexicano insurance officers and building contractors were men who eventually saved enough capital and were knowledgeable enough to become independent of local Anglos. By the mid-sixties, this nascent Mexicano middle class had doubled in size, diversified into new occupations, and entered the local bureaucracy. There were, however, still no Mexicano principals, police chiefs, or key bank officials, and the local Anglo business and civic clubs still enrolled only two or three token Mexicanos. Further, there were still no important elected city, school, or county officials.

The key political leadership role that this new Mexicano middle class played has already been described. But to fully understand the cultural transformation occurring, it is important to understand how ordinary Mexicanos were changing their views and were beginning to confront Anglos. Small daily acts of resistance that challenged local Anglo authority and legitimacy to rule became much more frequent from the forties on. The North Town City Council minutes indicate several incidents where local "Americans" were getting beaten in "Mexican Town." Sheriff Cameron was given the task of straightening out these problems and protecting "Americans" who ventured in the cantinas. Later sheriffs and police chiefs were often described in different terms. Police Chief Rowman, the man who replaced "El Cameron" operated differently. He drank in the cantinas and rarely mistreated Mexicanos during arrests. Often he would take someone who had too much to drink home instead of to jail. More important, he told the local bar owners and many Mexicanos to protect themselves and to throw out any Anglos who were disorderly or disrespectful. The bars were perhaps the first public territory that Mexicans took over and re-defined as Mexicano controlled. The recognition of local police during the late forties and early fifties was undoubtedly an important symbolic victory for the Mexicano male.

The local city minutes also show an increasing willingness of Mexicanos to complain about problems "on their side of the tracks." In North Town the Anglos live on the higher elevated side of town, and several hundred acres of surrounding farmland and the high side of town drain onto the Mexican side of town. A major portion of "Mexican Town" became flooded during heavy rains. In 1953, several local Mexicanos came to the council and complained about the drainage problem. By 1956 the local Mexicanos had created enough concern that a plan was developed to solve the problem through curbing, guttering, and paving the streets. Ultimately, the plan was abandoned because of opposition from both sides of the town. However, during the fifties increasing numbers of Mexicanos appeared before the board, demanding better drainage, more police during Saturday dances, and paved streets.

North Towners also reported that after the war more people began complaining about the school programs. A group of parents organized and vigorously complained to the school board about the mistreatment of Mexicano children in the Mexican school. They contended that their school was badly run with inferior books, broken toilets and no bus service. Further, they claimed that their children were excessively held back and unduly punished for speaking Spanish. This early confrontation of the school board also led to the first Mexican candidate in 1961. He was narrowly defeated, but this event was a significant break with the past when no Mexicano parents attempted to complain to teachers or the school board. The PCT in North Town fought for a new Mexican school and similar improvement from 1950 on. More parents were willing to demand their rights from the local schools.

By the fifties the Mexicano youth were also beginning to assert themselves. Several members described how there were "gangs" of students who "raised a lot of hell with gringos and the sheriffs." They described one group as some of the best football players in school. They wore leather jackets with the club's name on the back. Unlike big city gangs and clubs, their activities were quite tame and primarily social. They were the duck-tail, rock-and-roll Mexican Pachuco generation. One very important thing they did besides drink, dance, and play football was increasingly to stand up to Anglos. An ex-member expressed enormous pride in the fact that "the Anglos didn't mess around with us Mexicans anymore." The Mexicanos had a reputation for carrying knives and fighting in groups, and Anglos said they were indeed afraid of going over to"Mexican Town." There were apparently very few actual "rumbles" but the balance of power had clearly shifted.

These early Mexicano clubs were playing a historical role; even though they had no particular political ideology, they were a form of new political leadership among Mexicano youth. The Mexicano gang leaders described an incident in which the local sheriff came into one of their hang-outs to harass them. When he stopped the car, they surrounded it and began to rock it up and down until he bumped his head on the ceiling. He went back for his deputies, and they ran off. These groups also "policed" the school halls, not unlike a kind of Mexicano vigilante group. By the late fifties Mexicano youth had become the majority in the schools, and they began to "take-over" the clubs, elected offices, and the honor positions such as most popular and most handsome students.[16] By the early sixties these take-overs were well-organized, and there were informal "political leaders" for the Mexicano student body.

By the sixties Mexicanos had developed an ethnic group that began actively trying to control much greater portions of the local environment. Mexicanos had developed their own leadership group and community institutions. To a lesser degree they had developed their own economic independence and power from new local and external labor relationships. Underlying all these changes was an even more profound change in how Mexicanos thought about themselves, and in how they were willing to conduct their relations with Anglos. The old order and way of life was coming to pass. Increasingly, a "new kind of Mexican" was using new sources of power from new, urban based ethnic organizations and government programs to challenge politically the traditional Anglo leadership in North Town.

The increasing number of confrontations in local elections were, then, an outgrowth of a broader, more general cultural transformation among the Mexicano people. Gradually, the Mexicano has moved out of his isolated, defended cultural enclave and has broken down many segregated, Anglo public territories. The Mexicanos have forced a new set of rules for social etiquette and racial exchange upon local Anglos. The post war era had both opened up *and* further polarized these local communities. Despite the increasing polarization, the daily public lives of the Mexicano greatly changed. Mexicanos were no longer submissive and confined to their segregated enclaves on the *rancho* or in the North Town *colonia*. Increasingly, Mexicanos had a new sense of their own potential. Growing numbers believed that they were capable of succeeding in schools, in business and even in running the North Town public institutions. At least a number of the more prominent Mexicano community leaders sought to control even greater portions of their local environment.

Yet, despite the emergence of several Mexicano political leaders who had a greater sense of "ethnic politics," many Mexicanos did not share these new perspectives or aspirations. Most North Town Mexicanos still did not actively seek to control politically their community institutions. Considerable diversity still existed among the Mexicano people. Differences in basic values, political awareness and even wealth in the Mexicano community threatened this emerging ethnic unity. Ultimately, Mexicano leaders of the sixties factionalized during their first serious attempt to organize politically.

The Changing Anglo Group

The decline in the ability of North Town Anglos to control local institutions was characterized previously as a gradual process of change in the local modes of production and political leadership. Land use and labor relations had dramatically changed. The composition of landowners had changed with large influxes of absentee owners and leaser-manager type operators. The nature of local Anglo leadership had been transformed. The old political machines of the period from 1930 to 1950 died, and new Anglo leaders found it increasingly difficult to create a following among the masses of Mexicanos.

Further, North Town had become what could be called an administered unit. State and federal legislation and aid programs have greatly reduced their local decision-making autonomy. The mass media flood North Towners with new images of lifestyles and values. The urban areas draw greater numbers of their children away, and families have become smaller and more fragmented. In some ways, it is difficult to talk about North Town as an autonomous community. Their economic, political, and cultural dependency on external state and federal institutions were pervasive.

In power terms, the Anglos no longer had a direct, superior-subordinate relationship with Mexicanos. Local Mexicanos could increasingly derive sources of power from outside agencies, and they were no longer as bound by local labor relations, patterns of indebtedness , social segregation, and general beliefs about their cultural inferiority. By the 1960's Anglo leaders were forced to begin working out more equal, reciprocal relationships with Mexicanos. Some of the new Anglo leaders began to realize that they may no longer have the potential to control the local community institutions. They were forced to create new forms of political alliance and more subtle forms of control. In some ways, the local power relationship between Anglos and Mexicanos had become more open and competitive.

In response to the internal and external changes North Town was experiencing, a new post-war generation of Anglo community leaders developed. This group included many more modern ranchers and farmers as the modernization of agriculture blurred the distinction between merchants and agro-businessmen. A group of forty to fifty younger (thirty-five to fifty) businessmen and rancher/farmers formed the leadership class of the period from 1960 to the present. By historical standards, they were significantly more urban, educated, and politically liberal than earlier Anglo leaders. They have increasingly accepted external aid programs for the Mexicanos. They have also begun to build more linkages with the Mexicano community through individual intermediaries, the sharing of symbolic public positions, and multi-racial political coalitions.

One important measure of the changing Anglo beliefs was the way local Mexicanos compared earlier generations with the present Anglos. For most older Mexicanos, Anglos of the sixties were a great deal more friendly and respectful. Post-war Anglos no longer physically beat up or publicly shame Mexicanos. On a day-to-day basis, the social etiquette has greatly changed. No local sheriff would dare make a practice of beating up Mexicano drunks or sleeping with their wives. Such aggressive, disrespectful acts towards Mexicanos would be unthinkable and would elicit immediate counter-aggression. Most old-timers say things are much better for the Mexicano. They say, "We were nothing in the early days, now we have some self-respect."

Indeed, many of the more liberal local Anglo leaders of this era were more cordial and solicitous of Mexicanos at public school and community events. Such Anglo community leaders would be offended if described as being prejudiced towards Mexicanos. They could all point to a good deal of personal missionary activities, public courtesy, and a public ideology calling for bi-racial groups and political harmony. At least publicly, the key local Anglo leaders were ready to accommodate and cooperate with the Mexicanos they considered sufficiently responsible, patriotic, and successful.

However, many North Town Anglos still did not accept their declining power positions and the new political survival tactics. The more traditional Anglos were continually "creating problems" for the more diplomatic, alliance-seeking Anglo leaders. The more liberal Anglo leaders of the sixties frequently expressed consternation with their "radical, red necks." There were many basic cultural and class differences among Anglos that created strains in these new Anglo-Mexicano political coalitions. Such tendencies towards political factionalism were common among Anglos in pre-war days, and they continued during the colonia period.

Chapter 5

Community Conflict and the Rise of the Raza Unida

The description of economic and cultural changes in the region prior to the sixties illustrates that North Town residents experienced many changes in ethnic relations. Most North Town residents were aware of the gradual demographic and political decline of Anglos. Older residents saw two major economic eras and a strictly segregated social life come to pass. Local Mexicanos were rising to prominence in business, community leadership positions, and even in the professions. In the sixties such internal changes within the North Town community created the potential for an aggressive Mexicano political organization to develop.

Such internal developments were further fueled and encouraged by changes external to North Town. Increasingly, the Federal government and the national and Texas civil rights movement influenced ethnic relations in North Town. The push for school desegregation and the "war on poverty" programs were the two major federal programs that local residents acknowledged as "improvements" or "intrusions."

First, the Education Act of 1965 encouraged the new local Mexicano groups to press for change. This legislation provided funds for improving the education of poverty-level children. Funds were allocated for up-grading the educational program through additional, more modern teaching aids and materials. Teacher-aides were funded to work with classroom teachers as an attempt to bridge linguistic and other cultural differences. New curricular programs were designed to meet special needs of local students defined as "educationally deprived" such as the migrant education program.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has been the conduit for federal funds and has policed the local school system's adherence to the guidelines for the use of such funds. TEA generally has a very extensive set of specifications for local education. Curriculum requirements and staff licensing procedures are the same for each school district. State funds are appropriated by the legislature to enable local school districts to meet and maintain the state's minimum standards -- teachers' salaries, administrators' salaries, equipment, and so forth. Unless a school district is extremely wealthy, as are some districts in the West Texas oil fields, most districts devote their energies to meeting these state minimums. Special programs and curriculum innovations are rarely alternatives for most school districts without federal monies.

The funds made available by federal legislation and channeled through the TEA clearly contributed to shifting the local school leaders' emphasis from Anglo to Mexican-American student needs. The federal and state level agencies held a different set of goals and values regarding Mexican-Americans than school leaders.[1] Some of the guidelines of the Education Act specify that equipment purchased with such funds can only be used by low income and migrant children.

A concomitant feature of these federal-level programs was the policing role played by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). Through TEA, this department has forced compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which demands an "ethnic balance" in schools and classrooms where federal funds are used. Access to increased funding by local school districts has been, and still is, tied to the reorganization and the eventual destruction of important traditional ethnic boundaries. This was a source of consternation to local Anglo school leaders. The leaders speak of being "trapped" into program participation by the federal government. The programs are offered with ninety percent federal allocation and few guidelines the first year. The second year, however, the allocation of funds is reduced to eighty-five percent and the controls governing their use are increased. Each year the federal agencies reduce their funding but increase their control. Local Anglo school leaders perceive this as putting a heavier financial burden on the local districts while reducing their control.

Second, the federal poverty programs of the sixties also provided a further source of new power for local Mexican-Americans.[2] North County is part of a regionally funded organization called the Economic Opportunities Development Corporation (EODC). The importance of this organization is manifested in several ways. First, there is the increased economic resource made available to local citizens for solving a multiplicity of problems -- adult education, pre-school programs, health care, employment counseling, family counseling, legal aid, and a number of other services. The EODC staff in North Town understood their task to be meeting any and every need that local Mexican-Americans had. Second, the poverty program has provided local Mexican-Americans with administrative jobs and thereby the needed experience and skills in management necessary to compete with

Anglos. Third, since the local poverty program must be composed of a majority of low-income citizens, local Mexicano community members, often hand-picked by the Mexican-American EODC directors, control the decision-making board.

The North Town EODC program, and the programs spawned by its activities, were viewed as a constant threat by local Anglos. In North Town the EODC hired local Mexicano political leaders, and its offices functioned as an informal gathering place for local and regional Chicanos active in political organization. The EODC staff shared, to a degree, a political ideology held by local Mexicano activists; however, the EODC has not been as great a threat to Anglos as a more formidable community organization called Ciudadanos Unidos Mexicanos (United Mexican Citizens). Nevertheless, the poverty program has contributed toward new choices as well as the development of new beliefs about the rights and abilities of local Mexican-Americans.

By the late sixties there were other important post-civil rights movements among Mexicano students in Texas cities. Particularly San Antonio witnessed numerous student walk-outs, labor strikes, and increasing attempts by Mexican-Americans to occupy political positions such as the City Council, Commissioners' Court, and School Boards. This cultural and political change spawned a variety of new organizations such as the Brown Berets, Mexican-American Student Organization (MASO), and the Mexican-American Youth Organization (MAYO). Such organizations shared a number of beliefs that the

Anglo system was oppressive, that Mexican-Americans should unite and consolidate their power to overthrow the system, and that the Mexican-American culture of the Southwest was as good as, if not superior to, the Anglo way of life.

Although this is hardly an exhaustive treatment of the Chicano movement and its ideology, it illustrates some of the key ideas of the organizations developing in the late sixties. Their basic posture was more aggressive; they were more willing to confront, harass, insult, expose, and defeat traditional Anglo leaders, both liberal and conservative Democrats and Republicans.[3] By 1969 the influence of such urban ethnic groups, particularly the Raza Unida Party (RUP) had become apparent in several South Texas communities.

Political Mobilization of the Mexicanos from 1965 to 1972

It must be remembered that the traditional North Town political leaders were tied to the local Anglo-controlled county Democratic Party. A new entrepreneurial class of Mexicanos, which developed in the forties and fifties, were actively running city and school board candidates in the early sixties. An informal Mexican political organization, and individual Mexicanos ran in a coalition with Anglos for the city and school board. In 1964 three Mexicanos and their Anglo ally actually controlled the city council for one year. The same informal political group was also able to get two Mexicanos elected to the school board during the mid-sixties. But this organization, consisting largely of LULAC members, was plagued by internal conflicts. By 1966 they had become ineffective and had disbanded. This first, relatively "mild" ethnic confrontation between North Town Mexicanos and Anglos brought out many more voters and stimulated some Anglos to sponsor more Mexicanos for local elected leadership positions.

After the minor uprising in the early sixties and the heated exchanges on the first racially mixed city council of 1964 to 1965, racial harmony and progress seemed to earmark local politics in North Town. During the period from 1966 to 1972, individual Mexicanos were asked by Anglos to run for city and school leadership positions. Meanwhile any conscious, overt Mexicano ethnic mobilization remained fragmented and sporadic. Most of the candidates elected to the city and school positions were involved in the earlier LULAC group, or were pro-Mexicano in orientation. But at this point in time they decided to accept Anglo sponsorship. The leaders of this period described their philosophy as "working with Anglo leadership," rather than openly confronting Anglos. The young, inexperienced leaders did not attempt to develop a vigorous Mexicano organization.

From 1966 to 1972 North Town politics was relatively quiet.[4] The county's largest peanut farmer, a quiet, well-liked man, was mayor, and the Anglo city council began encouraging "responsible" Mexicano businessmen to run for office. A successful local Mexicano merchant, Mr. Daniel, and a restaurant owner, Mr. Matamoros, were elected in 1969 and 1970 by Anglos in turnouts of just over a hundred voters. The school board minutes also suggest that Anglos were actively seeking young Mexicanos for Board positions. A young building contractor, Mr. Esposito, and a self-employed pest exterminator, Mr. Rapido, were elected with Anglo sponsorship and by a light voter turn-out in 1968 and 1970.

In North Town the new RUP movement began making frequent, formal contacts with some local Mexican-American leaders during the state election campaigns of 1972. Prior to this, several younger Mexicanos of the community, some from the San Antonio colleges, had urged the traditional community leaders to take stronger stands against local Anglos. They exhorted older leaders to seize control of local institutions as RUP had in Aztlán City. Several traditional Mexicano community leaders were aware of, and sympathetic towards, the movimiento in San Antonio and Aztlán City. They followed the politics in these more "advanced" areas through personal contacts and newspapers such as the Chicano Times, La Verdád, and the San Antonio Express. By By 1972, considerable diversity of views still existed among North Town Mexicanos regarding local conditions, political strategies, and the Chicano movement. However, some younger Mexicanos and older leaders of the early sixties were beginning to feel that North Town Mexicanos could replicate the Aztlán City RUP take-over. They generally reasoned that Mexicanos were a dominant majority and should rightly have at least a majority representation among local elected leaders.

In the fall of 1972 Mexicano community members described two informal groups of Mexicanos who shared much of the new Raza Unida

Party ideology of ethnic relations but who were at odds with each other. First, there was a small group called Raza Unida, which consisted of primarily the sons (some college-educated) of prominent local businessmen. There were about twelve male members who had their own bank account and baseball team. At that time the Raza Unida members were highly critical of local Mexicano leaders, many their own relatives, for not being more politically active. They accused the traditional leaders of trusting Anglos too much and of not following the example of the Aztlán City Chicano take-over of 1969. The key leaders of the other major informal group of Mexicanos, which we shall call Ciudadanos (a name they ultimately chose), consisted of a loose-knit group of fifteen to twenty young businessmen and professionals.[5] They consistently criticized the local Raza Unida group for its Anglo hatred and considered the "Raza approach" to be too "militant" and "radical" to improve effectively the North Town community. Several members illustrated this "tension" between these groups by describing a fight between members of each group at a softball game in the spring of 1972.

In the fall of 1972, however, the group perceived as less radical were informally recognized by many local Mexicanos as the main community leaders. Indeed, they had two members on both the city council and the school board, but this loose-knit friendship group had no overt public political identity or set of stated goals. Because several of their members were active political and civic leaders, they expressed considerable apprehension towards the state-wide Raza Unida movement. Their suspicion and criticism of the local Raza group reflected the belief that local Mexicanos could handle their own social and political relationships with the Anglos. In fact, many Ciudadanos members were convinced that an accommodation could be worked out with the local Anglos who were "good people."

Particularly those Ciudadanos leaders on the city council and school board felt that their relationships with Anglos were quite productive.Others conciliatory towards Anglos were businessmen who had many Anglo customers. Conversely, a number of people who followed these key Ciudadanos leaders -- some relatives, friends, and wives -- believed that any cooperative relationship with Anglos was doomed to failure. Hence, the informal Ciudadanos group of leaders and followers, a potential voting bloc of approximately 500 people, also included a variety of views concerning Anglos and political strategy;[6] but Ciudadanos Mexicanos could generally be described as still distrusting the openly anti-gringo, confrontation posture of the state-wide and Aztlán City Raza Unida.

However, as the political competition "heated up" during the fall county elections of 1972, the informal Ciudadanos group formally identified itself as Ciudadanos Mexicanos Unidos. They held several open community meetings to mobilize political votes and run candidates. By the spring elections of 1973, the Ciudadanos leaders and followers had generally become openly anti-Anglo and actively sought the political advice and support of the Aztlán City RUP members.

The manner in which local Ciudadanos leaders changed their beliefs about the Anglos during the period of November 1972 through July 1973 was striking. By the late spring and early summer of 1973, Ciudadanos members had become considerably more sympathetic to the militant pro-Chicano posture of the Raza Unida movement. Conversely, Anglos were organized into an aggressively anti-Raza Unida organization so that the town became extremely polarized along Mexicano and Anglo lines. The chronicle of events during 1972 to 1973 will illustrate this change in the Ciudadanos organization and the growing Raza Unida influence in North Town. It will also indicate how Anglos organized and responded, and how ethnic relations escalated to higher levels of antagonism, distrust and polarization.

The Mexicano Takeover of the City and Schools in 1972

In the spring of 1972 several prominent Mexicano community leaders from the informal Ciudadanos group decided to run for the city council and school board. But since there was no well-organized Mexicano effort, the candidates were not carefully screened and selected by the Ciudadanos. Several people were encouraged to run, and four candidates, two for the city and two for the school board, gradually emerged and quietly made known their intent to run. There was no open Ciudadanos organization so that no candidates were openly supported, and there were no formal campaign rallies or active community organizations. Each candidate, with help from close family and friends, ran their own low-key, seemingly separate campaigns. They generally emphasized the needs of Mexicanos and avoided open criticism of local Anglos or the "system."

Aside from the absence of an open Mexicano organization and any overt anti-Anglo campaigning, there were other important reasons why these "unsponsored" Mexicano candidates did not arouse local Anglos. First, as previously indicated, the 1965 to 1971 period was politically calm, and Anglos and Mexicanos were cooperating on the city council and school board. Anglos felt they had adequately demonstrated their willingness to elect and appoint what they deemed as "responsible, capable Mexicans" to leadership positions. Concomitantly, a number of the influential Mexicano community leaders sincerely felt that the mid-sixties period was one of considerable progress, and that Mexicanos could work with the "good," more "liberal" Anglos.

Second, the four Mexicano candidates were young (mid-thirties) and had very non-threatening backgrounds. Three were the sons and daughters of very prominent, well-respected Mexicano businessmen. One school board candidate was the eldest son of the largest melon grower. Mr. Talvez, who had served on the school board, had been in partnership with Anglos. One city council candidate, Mr. Salinas, was the son of a highly respected Mexicano grocer popular with Anglos and was one of the first Mexicanos to be in the local Chamber of Commerce. The other city candidate, Mrs. Tolivar, was the daughter of a well-liked tavern owner, and the wife of a successful, likeable civil service employee. On the other hand, the fourth candidate, an unemployed, poorly educated woman, was not taken seriously by Anglos. They felt that she had no chance of winning; in fact, a popular joke among Anglos was that only the ignorant Mexicans would vote for her because they feared that she was a "witch." As a result of these beliefs, the voter turnout was relatively light, and all four Mexicano candidates won the election by two-to-one margins over the Anglo candidates. Their strength apparently came from a core of 400-500 Mexicano voters and approximately 200 Anglo voters.

Within a few weeks after the election, Anglos began to feel that there had been a "Chicano takeover." Much of the initial controversy and conflict centered on the actions of the Mexicano-controlled city council.[7] Many Anglos were "shocked" with the "rude" and openly hostile way Council business was being conducted. Some Anglos described how this new "power had gone to the Mexicans' heads." Anglos reported incidents of being interrupted, overlooked, and belittled. Mexicanos reported that they were finally beginning to "speak out" and "fight for their rights for the first time." Several open conflicts resulted between the hold-over Anglo clerks, the city manager and the new Mexicano councilmen. In one incident, the Anglo city manager reportedly told a Mexicano clerk to "shut that damm Latin music off." One of the councilmen, Mr. Matamoros, subsequently accused the city manager of racism, which disrupted a city council meeting. In a subsequent meeting a fist-fight ensued between this councilman and the husband of an Anglo city clerk. The Mexicano councilman had reportedly offended this lady by calling her a "Mexican hater." He accused her of mistreating Mexicanos who came to pay their water bill.

Confrontations were frequent in the city hall, and such open hostilities and several "rash" acts further incensed local Anglo leaders. The new council raised the wages of city employees from sixty to seventy dollars to at least $150 a week. Many of these employees were reportedly nineteen to twenty-five year veterans. During this controversy the Anglo city manager was asked why these wages had not been raised in the past. He reportedly replied, "they can't read or write and are not worth more than sixty to seventy dollars per week." The pressures on the Anglo city manager of ten years grew, and he "was forced to resign" several months after the takeover. In protest, the Anglo mayor and one of the hold-over Anglo councilmen also resigned. The Mexicano-controlled council then appointed two other Mexicanos, one considered a "long-hair radical" from Raza Unida, to fill the seats until the spring elections. According to local Anglos, the management of city government deteriorated. Many Anglos began going to city meetings to "watchdog" the council, which the Mexicanos considered harassment. The council meetings became, for Anglos, "spectacles of Mexican arrogance" and for the Mexicanos, "illustrations of Anglo racial superiority and bigotry."

Subsequently, the new council hired Mr. Mata, the town's first Mexicano lawyer and the eldest son of a prominent labor contractor, as the new city manager. He reported that some Anglos refused to pay their bills or made a point of complaining frequently. Some Anglos, such as the bank president, reportedly told him that they disliked what was happening but hoped he would run it fairly, and the bank president vowed "to go along for the good of the city." Generally, however, many local Anglos judged the actions of the new Mexicano council from the standpoint of their traditional beliefs. Mexicans, being inherently lawless and inefficient, were sure to ruin the city financially. Conversely, the Mexicanos protested that Anglos were purposely uncooperative to discredit the new Mexicano administration. Some hold-over Anglo clerks were suspected of deliberately tampering with the records to make Mexicano councilmen seem incompetent.[8]

After six months of frequent ethnic conflict during council meetings, the Anglo community was up in arms and was well-organized to defeat a Mexicano candidate for sheriff in the November, 1972, county elections. The husband of the newly elected councilwoman, who became particularly outspoken and "anti-Anglo," ran for county sheriff. Mr. Tolivar's campaign was based on the rationale that the present Anglo sheriff treated Mexicans and Anglos differently. The incumbent Anglo sheriff, a mild-mannered man who had hired several Mexicano deputies, was rarely described as anti-Mexican. One Mexicano claimed that the Anglo sheriff was a "liberal" because he had made a strong plea at the Rotary Club to admit Mexicans. But many Ciudadanos members perceived the sheriff as a weak man, "easily manipulated by the rich Anglos who made him."

The key case which many Mexicanos cited to demonstrate his favoritism was his treatment of Anglo teenagers caught with marijuana.

In 1971 a team of FBI agents had uncovered a "drug ring" of Anglo high school students. It was the contention of local Mexicanos that the sheriff already knew of this ring but did nothing because the students were the sons and daughters of prominent Anglos. The subsequent arrests and trial in the county court resulted in a two-year prison term for the Anglo youth who was the "leader" and seller, and suspended sentences for twelve other Anglos.[9] Local Mexicanos pointed to this as further proof that the sheriff and the judge were "in the back pocket of the Anglo rich." In addition to this alleged favoritism towards Anglos, the sheriff was also accused of "negligence" in the case of a Mexican-American jail prisoner who reportedly hanged himself.

Mr. Tolivar was defeated in the election for sheriff, however, by a heavy Anglo voter turnout.[10] Local Mexican-Americans point to a number of Anglo election tactics to support their rationale that Anglos had no intention of "sharing control," even though the Mexicanos are in the majority. First, several Mexicanos related that elderly Mexican-Americans received phone calls threatening their loss of social security benefits if they attempted to vote. Some Mexican-Americans who worked for Anglos reported being subtly told they might lose their jobs. Again, the sheriff's deputies were reported to have been out taking pictures of the voters, which was interpreted as a means to check up on the Anglos' employees. There was the further case of a threatened arrest of a Mexican-American candidate's wife for driving voters to the polls. The arresting sheriff's deputies used the rationale that since her husband was a candidate, this type of behavior was illegal. According to the accounts, the arrest was not actually made, "because all of the other Mexican-Americans standing in line to vote demanded to be arrested as well."

Several other incidents during the elections were used to characterize the Anglos as "ruthless and oppressive."[11] First, Anglo poll-watchers were seen helping non-English speaking Mexicano voters to mark the Anglo candidates when the Mexican-American had specified preference for the Mexicano candidate. Second, Mexican-Americans were reportedly not allowed to vote if they did not have their registration cards, even though their names were on the poll lists. Yet, Anglos were reportedly allowed to vote if they had a card, even if their names were not on the poll lists. Mexicanos interpreted this as Anglo use of the rules to suit their own ends. Third, the Anglo assistant county clerk reportedly went into local nursing homes and helped even senile people vote, allegedly for the Anglo candidates.

Fourth, the election recorded 600 absentee votes, which made no sense to local Mexicanos. Most absentee voters were students and were away attending college. Several Anglo college students reported receiving periodic letters from the Anglo leaders urging them to vote. The absentee vote was also believed to include a number of "wetback" votes and elderly people in the local nursing home. Several Anglo ranchers reportedly "signed up" all their wetbacks to vote absentee for the Anglo candidates. The county clerk also reportedly sent out a number of absentee votes already notarized, which helped assure their return. Finally, one ballot box from the southern part of the county, with only sixteen votes, took four hours to count, and it was four o'clock in the morning before many of the outlying boxes were reported. The Mexicanos judged all of these acts to be illegal, and they believed that Anglos had "messed with the votes."

The Organization of the Ciudadanos Unidos

These events and the defeat of the Mexicano candidate for sheriff spurred the Mexicanos to develop a more openly aggressive political organization. The new Ciudadanos Unidos Mexicanos organization was created in December, 1973. The original thirteen members were local Mexican-American entrepreneurs, educators and a local Catholic priest. It is important to note that nearly all of the prominent Mexicano businessmen and professionals were openly or quietly supporting this original organization. As many as thirty or forty families had a history of political involvement in the early organizations after 1960. Some of the earlier leaders were inactive but vocal supporters. Some of the younger professionals working in the Anglo schools and local offices were quiet but helped financially and organizationally. Likewise, a number of working women, typically employed by Anglos, were also active opinion makers and barrio organizers. Only a small number of the more prominent Mexicano families born in North Town were outside the Ciudadanos organization.

The group's broadly stated purpose emphasized educational, welfare and political issues. Their basic goals were to achieve the following: paved streets, street lights, more efficient sewage system, adequate drainage, recreational parks, and an educational system more attuned to Mexicano needs. The Mexicanos compared their section of North Town with the Anglo section and concluded that Anglos would never provide the same resources for their development. The idea of a Mexicano majority, as opposed to the earlier idea of representation, was espoused. But the initial Ciudadanos goals and philosophy were carefully spelled out to avoid the notion of total "Chicano control." The young Mexicano priest was particularly influential in stressing the idea that Ciudadanos was pro-Mexicano, *not* anti-Anglo.

The more moderate Ciudadanos leaders were particularly anxious to portray Ciudadanos as a "non-political" organization, not unlike a Chamber of Commerce. They sought to minimize both the Anglos' anxiety and expected retaliatory measures, e.g., firings, cancelled loans, punishment of school children, and police harassment. Indeed, in these early stages the Ciudadanos Mexicanos were very fearful of how the Anglos would react to this challenge. Ideologically, they were also much more interested in proportional representation than dominance and control, and the public image they presented was quite tame in comparison to "militant" Chicano leaders in Aztlán City or San Antonio.

Some Anglo leaders, although fearful of this new Ciudadanos, were still hopeful that Ciudadanos and its "radical Mexican priest" would listen to reason. At this stage of development, several Anglos referred to the new organization as simply a "Mexican Chamber of Commerce," but the key leaders in the Anglo organization deeply distrusted Ciudadanos.

In the early development of Ciudadanos, members held a variety of views about Anglos, the Raza Unida party, and local mobilization tactics. Some members bitterly hated all Anglos and derisively labeled them "gringos." Others, particularly the school leaders, were more prone to believe that *some* Anglos could be trusted to work for Mexicanos. They argued against any rhetoric or actions that might alienate those Anglos. Initially, many Ciudadanos members viewed their task as more educational than strictly political.

The major covert task was to "educate" *Anglos* to a new understanding of the Mexican-American. More moderate Ciudadanos leaders argued that traditional Anglo views of Mexicans as socially and culturally inferior were not "inborn" and could be eliminated by education. Ciudadanos members wanted to demonstrate to Anglos that they could follow the law and manage local institutions honestly, fairly and efficiently. They reasoned that the eventual take-over would be gradual and reasonable, and that Anglos would come to accept it. Such an orientation tended to prevail in the Ciudadanos organization until after the spring elections of 1973.

There were many Mexican-American families who did not join the Ciudadanos mobilization. They did not share the Ciudadanos' beliefs about local ethnic relations and opportunities. Several families passionately described their own histories of upward economic mobility. According to their accounts, they came from Mexico and were not able to speak English. But they worked hard, took advantage of opportunities, and were able to finance several children's college education. Another, who campaigned with the Anglos as part of their slate for City Hall, believed he was a special target for Ciudadanos' hostility. He decided to join the Anglos when a bullet broke a window in his home. He assumed that the act was committed by someone in the Ciudadanos group.

There were also many Mexicanos who tried to stay "neutral."[12] Generally this meant staying out of any public political activities. A variety of explanations were given for this attempted neutrality. First, not all Mexicanos agreed that Anglo dominance was bad. Many Mexicanos spoke of being well treated by Anglos and that they "had nothing against them." Second, others shared the belief that Anglos should share the governance with Mexicanos but were not willing to accept the hostility and possible economic consequences of a bitter political battle. Mexicanos taking these positions recall being constantly pressured by Anglos and the Ciudadanos members.

These "neutral," less politicized Mexican-Americans often shared a number of Anglo views on local ethnic relations and political mobilization. First, they contended that local Mexicanos were economically and socially subordinate because they had not worked hard enough, not because Anglos had kept them down. Second, they were opposed to polarizing their community. Third, they did not feel that there was any need to seek change in the existing structure. For example, it was their premise that the proposed bilingual education program would encourage local Mexican-American students to maintain their Spanish, and thus hinder their social mobility.

Fourth, they believed that Ciudadanos members were committed to violence, a belief reinforced by reported personal conflicts between Ciudadanos members and their Mexicano opponents. Perhaps sixty-five percent of the Mexicanos fit into this broad category of politically inactive or "neutral" voters. It is among this relatively inactive majority that both the Mexicano and Anglo political leaders sought additional support. For the Raza Unida these Mexicanos were the silent, colonized Mexicano mass. For the traditional Anglo leaders they represented the more reasonable, grateful, but uneducated Mexican labor force.

The Mexican-Americans described above were often perceived and labeled by Ciudadanos members as vendidos (sell-outs). They were described as being "used by the Anglos," but "once they became aware of this they will come over to us." It was extremely difficult for a Mexicano openly active in the Anglo political organization to live in North Town. They reportedly suffered the loss of long-time friends, insults in public places, partial boycotts of their businesses, and being publicly snubbed. Their children also experienced name-calling and taunts, and some "vendidos" received an occasional malicious phone call or letter. Several key public figures (a Mexicano councilman, the local football coach, and a sheriff's deputy), were placed in particularly difficult positions. Because of the strong social pressures placed on a few openly pro-Anglo Mexicanos, most Mexican-Americans who were either "neutral" or privately pro-Anglo led double lives. In efforts to please both sides, they judiciously avoided any public political meetings and frequent contacts with key leaders on either side. They privately promised their support to each side and became astute managers of their public images so that neither side would doubt their loyalty.

Anglo Mobilization Against the Ciudadanos Threat

The response by North Town Anglos to the Mexicano 1972 takeover of the city council and school board, led to increased ethnic mobilization and polarization. Where members of both groups had previously developed comfortable working relationships, the confrontation created intense suspicion and hostility. It became almost impossible for people from either group to maintain inter-ethnic relations. The boundaries became so clear that one Protestant minister voiced his fear at having talked with a local Catholic priest at the funeral home. It was a casual exchange of pleasantries. Yet the Protestant minister, who was trying to "keep politics out of the church" and remain neutral, became concerned about the meeting. He worried as to how his parishners might interpret the fact that they had been talking. This Mexicano priest was viewed by Anglos as *the* leader of Ciudadanos, or *La Raza* as Anglos referred to the group.

As previously mentioned, North Town Anglos had observed the Chicano movement in Aztlán City with varying degrees of interest and concern. Prior to the Spring of 1973, most Anglos in North Town believed that "their Mexicans" were not like those of Aztlán City; local Mexicans were "level headed." Yet some Anglos didn't accept this idea and accounted for the Aztlán City "take over" as a result of the Anglos' failure to include Mexicanos in local governance. North Town Anglos who shared this notion were less worried about local Mexicanos mobilizing, because Mexicanos had been represented on the North Town council and school board. In effect, the Aztlán City experience was not expected to be replicated in North Town. A third view held by a number of Anglos was eventually responsible for Anglo counter-mobilization. From this perspective, Aztlán City Chicanos were "conspiring" to take over all of South Texas, and North Town was one of the first targets on their list. The local Ciudadanos mobilization was believed to be a covert political extension of the Raza Unida Party in Aztlán City. Several business and professional men and their wives had been meeting fairly regularly for at least a year and discussing the "conspiracy" of the Chicano movement in South Texas. They were particularly disturbed by the specter of Aztlán City where more than fifty percent (150 families) of the Anglos had left town.[13] Given the population predominance of Mexicanos (seventy-five percent), these Anglo leaders feared a similar "destruction" of the North Town Anglo community.

When Ciudadanos Unidos Mexicanos was organized in December of 1972, this group of Anglos decided to counter with an "inclusive" bi-racial political organization. This tactic was intended to counter the exclusive Mexican membership in the Ciudadanos, and expose Ciudadanos as a "racist" organization. In December 1972, the North County Better Government League was established. A statement of purpose was agreed upon and circulated throughout the county in both languages. It reads as follows:

> North County Better Government League is an organization of and for the people of North County. Its primary purpose is to actively promote good, representative government which is responsive to all the people and their needs.
>
> The organization is for supporting those candidates which are of the highest caliber, personal integrity, background and experience which qualifies them to serve.
>
> The organization is for keeping more than one political entity available in North County to insure that all people have a true possibility to express themselves through elected representatives.
>
> The organization is for a viable community which can prosper and grow economically for the benefit of all our citizens. We want community harmony and everyone working together to accomplish common goals.
>
> We are for full utilization of the abilities and talents of all our local people and equal opportunity for all without regard to political beliefs.
>
> We support the concept of local people in positions of authority which represent the interest of local people.
>
> We are for school systems that have as their main purpose the education of children without using them as tools for political purpose. We are for respect and obedience in the home and on and off the school campus.
>
> The organization is for sound, honest and qualified law enforcement. We support law and order with fairness to all concerned.
>
> We are for freedom of our religious institutions from political turmoil and upheaval.
>
> The organization is for freedom for all people to participate and express their political beliefs without fear of intimidation.
>
> We are for sustaining our county and its communities as a good place to live and raise our families without prejudice and fear. We are for the projection of a noncontroversial attitude which will cultivate respect and interest among other people in becoming a part of our area.

The statement of the BGL (Better Government League) platform reflects, in an antithetical fashion, all the traditional cultural beliefs held by some Anglos regarding Mexicanos. Such words as "good, representative, responsible, personal integrity, harmony, freedom, honesty and fairness, and experience," were intended as contrasts to what the BGL believed characterized the "La Raza-type Mexican." Such ideas sought to undercut the new self-concept that local Mexicanos were attempting to encourage. The idea permeating the BGL statement of purpose was that Ciudadanos governance would not represent the interests of "all" local citizens, i.e., Mexicans generally take care of their own. There was also a heavy emphasis upon local governance, which exhibited Anglo fears regarding the Aztlán City La Raza "taking over" North Town. The school system was believed to be an important locus for possible ethnic political confrontation, and there were fears that even the churches might be disrupted.

The BGL reportedly had several hundred dues-paying members, among them were approximately a dozen Mexican-Americans.[14] It appeared that the Mexican-American BGL members were heavily dependent upon the Anglos economically. At BGL meetings, in front of Anglos, and to us in private, these Mexicanos spoke of their belief in ethnic "togetherness." They seemed to be very anxious to communicate a pro-Anglo posture. At the same time, they did not believe in dividing the town along ethnic lines. In fact, they often expressed hostility towards Ciudadanos members for "causing all this trouble." They did not believe Anglos were the cause of the depressed economic conditions experienced by most local Mexicanos. Instead they blamed other Mexicanos for lacking initiative and willingness to work hard. Yet, some of the same Mexican-Americans appeared to be playing both sides of the political fence. Several BGL Mexican-Americans actively sought the good will of Ciudadanos members by attending Ciudadanos rallies and socializing with the leaders. Only a few Mexican Americans publicly supported the BGL and permanently cut off relationships with fellow Mexicanos.

In mobilizing both Anglos and Mexican-Americans a central theme of the BGL was that the Aztlán City Raza Unida was a "communist conspiracy," and the North Town Ciudadanos was a part of this plot. North Town Anglos generally believed that the local Mexicanos were being "used" by outsiders in this conspiracy. Most Anglos did not mean that any of the local Mexicanos were communists, but one man did claim that "they" were trained in Cuba.

For Anglos, the behavior of local Ciudadanos Mexicanos, some of whom were long-time associates, was extremely difficult to understand. The Anglos reasoned that their local Mexicans were content, hence the origin of their discontent had to be outsiders. A "communist conspiracy" was the only logical explanation for their new, "strange" behavior. Although the conspiracy argument was not overtly used to gather public support, the idea was common in private discussions and undoubtedly stimulated some Anglos to join and vote for the BGL.

The "conspiracy" idea was particularly ascribed to a feared takeover of the public schools. A Ciudadanos school board was expected to establish an all-Chicano administration, and eventually an all-Chicano faculty. This would then lead to a Chicano curriculum and the dominant use of Spanish in the classrooms, i.e., a total Chicano school system which would "push out" the Anglo students. In the Anglo scenario, the same events would happen in the city hall and the county courthouse, leaving a totally Chicano environment and intolerable conditions for the Anglo minority. Police protection would be non-existent, taxes raised and misused, land-owners forced to sell, immoralities condoned, and good citizens insulted and unfairly treated. Community life would be pervaded by constant conflict, hatred, vengeance and mismanagement. Local Anglos were filled with intense fears, and many privately confided that they would sell their properties and move if conditions worsened. It became, then, a battle for the preservation of their way of life.

The Anglo political consolidation under the BGL was not, however, as easy as the preceding discussion might imply. There were a number of basic divisions among North Town Anglos, already described earlier, that persisted during this area. Not all Anglos shared the above views of Ciudadanos, nor did they entirely condone some of the election tactics used by fellow Anglos. In spite of many basic social, religious, and economic differences, the idea of a "conspiracy" was, however, a powerful mobilizing idea. Very diverse Anglos rallied together in near unanimity against this threat to their community and way of life. The voting members of the BGL included nearly every Anglo in North County, whereas the leadership and the core of active members was much smaller and more representative of what many called "the leading citizen-types."

Generally, the active BGL members numbered no more than fifty or sixty. They included the most prominent, middle-aged (thirty to fifty), middle income ($15,000-40,000), and traditional civic-minded community members. They were the prominent young businessmen, farmers, and ranchers who would have normally run the local community institutions and strongly supported local churches. Of the fifty or sixty active members, some husband and wife pairs, perhaps no more than six or eight, were the key leaders. At least publicly a local electrical contractor, a rancher and wife (a teacher), a doctor and wife and several merchants who were traditionally active politically were the visible leaders. The image that most local people held was that the rich, "silk stocking" crowd of old North Town families were the real BGL leaders. Most of these active leaders were not the big money ranchers/farmers and retired businessmen, but they were considered socially prominent, educated and community-minded. Allegedly, behind these people was the "big money," i.e., the wealthy absentee landowners, the banker, the big money farmers, and the retired wealthy. Their role was to quietly encourage and finance these younger, more vigorous leaders. This up-and-coming group had followed closely the demise of Anglos in Aztlán City, and they were highly motivated to arouse local Anglos to avoid a similar fate in North Town.

Organizationally, the BGL met publicly as a group once a month during the election period. The meetings were informal and generally involved discussing illegal and socially inappropriate acts of the

La Raza; the active membership also expressed their general ideas about campaign strategy. However, most of the important tactical decisions were apparently made among the smaller group of leaders and not discussed at these public meetings. Several members indicated that private meetings at selected houses and extensive use of the telephone was a much safer way of making decisions and sounding out people. Generally, the intense feelings of several key leaders appeared to hold the group together, rather than an elaborate, formalized organizational structure.

Describing precisely who wielded power in the BGL group is difficult since the North Town Anglos were extremely suspicious of outside "researchers" and "reporters." Nevertheless, even without access to the inner circles of the BGL, it was possible to generally know whose ideas were most influential in the BGL. No one figure seemed to dominate the leadership, and a small group appeared constantly to discuss and plan strategy privately. Since these key eight or ten leaders were willing to do much of the organizational work for the elections, had "researched the La Raza threat," and were generally articulate and respected, they frequently swayed the larger group on questions of tactics and policy.

Ideologically, it would be quite difficult to describe either the key leaders or the core of active BGL members. Generally, most would have characterized themselves as "moderates" or "conservatives" politically. In discussions of the McGovern "take over" of the Democratic party, they were appalled at his "radicalism." Most felt that the federal government had grown too big, had given away too much money to "welfare addicts" and had meddled in the lives of people excessively. Others generalized this "creeping liberalism" and big government to many other areas of life. Some saw the American way declining; they felt that people no longer knew how to work, save, help a neighbor, or even be patriotic and religious. Most believed strongly in the American free-enterprise system, the American form of government, strict law-and-order, and an important role for America in preserving the free world from communism. Since they considered themselves a "modern rural people," they placed primacy on land ownership, small-town community life, and progress through a blend of rural and urban life styles. What they all shared ideologically was a sense that La Raza did not stand for many of the values underpinning their political and social ideals.

In spite of this perceived clash in ideals, not all BGL members felt the same about the Ciudadanos leaders, some of whom they had known and worked with for years. Some Ciudadanos members were believed to be extremely anti-Anglo and intimately connected to the Aztlán City movement; others were perceived as acting out of altruism and as "duped into joining La Raza." But as the battle deepened, most Anglos became increasingly suspicious and critical of all Ciudadanos leaders.

The BGL Campaign and Election Victories of 1973

Initially, the BGL election strategy was designed to increase Anglo awareness of the Raza threat without further provoking the Ciudadanos Mexicanos. However, this backfired early in the campaign. The most dramatic event in the campaign occurred when the BGL sponsored a public meeting and invited several Anglos from Aztlán City to explain the effects of "this Chicano take over." The meeting was held before a packed house (approximately 500 people) at a dance hall owned by a Mexican-American family sympathetic to the BGL. The BGL chairman introduced the speakers by saying that the purpose of the meeting was to hear several Aztlán City citizens describe the results of the Chicano take over. There was a question period after each speaker finished. The speakers emphasized the occurrence of a heavy out-migration of "good" people, losses of industry, and declining economic growth, as well as general social strife. The Chicano administration was characterized as riddled with corruption and illegal acts.

After the speaker's presentations several questions were asked in a perfunctory manner. At this point a local Ciudadanos member took the floor and addressed the gathering. He contended that North Town did not need outsiders to come and tell them how to handle their problems. He was greeted with boos, hissing, and cursing from Anglos. Some Mexicanos who were openly supportive of him insisted that Anglos were now being hypocritical. Prior to this meeting, Anglos had been critical of bringing outsiders into the local political situation. Yet, as the Ciudadanos speakers pointed out, "You gringos can bring in outsiders to stir up people when it helps you but we can't."

The North Town Mexicano leaders were supported by a sizeable contingent of Chicanos from Aztlán City who were present at the meeting.

Mr. Ramsey Muñiz, the Raza Unida candidate for Texas governor in the last election, addressed the Anglo speakers. He too contended that the Anglos from Aztlán City were only telling one side of the story. He and the others demanded the right to present the "whole" picture. The BGL chairman responded by telling him that the meeting's purpose was not to present both sides of the issue. The meeting became very unruly and incoherent, and both sides were often hostile. Although the groups were physically segregated, the exchanges became so heated that the BGL chairman closed the meeting to avoid violence.

This meeting was an important event in North Town history for several reasons. It was the first time that local Mexicanos had publicly challenged Anglos. It overtly symbolized what had previously existed covertly -- political polarization along ethnic lines. Some Anglos, who voiced the opinion that the meeting had been a bad tactical mistake, placed the blame on "racist" BGL members. However, most Anglos believed the behavior of the Mexicanos at the meeting supported their contention that Mexicanos are disorderly, boisterous, foul-mouthed, and prone to an excess of emotion, which can lead to physical violence.

On the other hand, local Mexicanos believed the meeting to be another example of Anglo chicanery. One Mexicano participant mentioned that after the meeting several Mexican-Americans attempted to speak to the BGL leader regarding the one-sided presentation. The BGL leader allegedly told them that "we speak and you listen." The Mexicanos responded by telling the Anglos that the old days of the supposedly dumb, sleepy Mexican who passively took orders from Anglos were gone. They threatened that, "if the Anglo did not wake up and listen, his days were numbered." This incident where the Anglo BGL leader told the Mexicanos "we speak and you listen," became the Mexicano rallying cry. It was much used and quoted to symbolize how racist the Anglo BGL of North Town was.

The remainder of the spring 1973 election campaign was anti-climactic compared to the previously described meeting. Anglos sought to respond to Ciudadanos tactics wherever they appeared. Ciudadanos ran radio spots and newspaper ads. The BGL countered them with their own. It quickly became obvious in the campaign that the BGL had more money and leisure time to devote to the campaign.

A second public meeting was attempted by the BGL about a month after the first. This was a covered dish supper with a speaker from the Governor's office. The audience consisted of mainly BGL leaders, some Anglo supporters, and approximately two dozen Mexicanos. The members of Ciudadanos did not attend. The Governor's representative, a Mexican-American, pleased the Anglo audience by emphasizing citizenship, hard work, and the secret ballot. His discussion of citizenship stressed the need for all people to work together regardless of race; local problems could only be solved by local citizens. The stress on the work ethic stemmed from the Anglos' notion that anyone could succeed in America if they worked hard. The speaker also touched on the secret ballot because some Anglos feared that Mexican-American voters were being intimidated. The Mexicano police chief's wife reportedly told Mexicanos to vote for Ciudadanos, because her husband, who had the key to the ballot box, could check their ballots. In response the BGL ran the following ad in the local newspaper:

> Has anyone ever told you that the election officials or any one else can tell you how you voted? If so, they do not understand the secret ballot.
>
> You do not identify yourself on the ballot -- if you do it is thrown out as a mutilated ballot. You do sign the stub and detach it from the ballot.
>
> The stub box is sealed by the District Clerk before delivering it to the polls and remains sealed until it is returned to the District Clerk and destroyed after time for contest expires.
>
> The unidentified ballots are placed in the ballot box which is kept by the election officials or their agent until destroyed.
>
> NO ONE IS ALLOWED OR AUTHORIZED TO COMPARE THE STUBS WITH THE BALLOTS.
>
> Therefore your ballot is SECRET.

After the meeting several Anglos said they were disappointed that the "radical Mexicans did not hear the speaker because it would have done them good." The two previously described BGL events illustrate their attempts to use external power sources to influence a larger segment of the public. Anglo visitors from Aztlán City and the Governor's office were important symbols to promote publicly the BGL view of the conflict. The Aztlán City Anglos warned people of the "Chicano conspiracy." They stressed that the open confrontation at the BGL meeting demonstrated the lawless character of "Chicano politics." Conversely, the man from the Governor's office symbolized the legality of the Anglos' cause, their desire for racial harmony, and the fairness of the present election system.

On several other occasions during the campaign, Anglos also used state agencies and laws to thwart the Mexicanos. They had a Mexicano police chief disqualified by using a regulation of the State Law Enforcement Officers Association. The newly appointed police chief of the Ciudadanos-controlled council was forced to relinquish his position because of a DWI violation on his record. This was ultimately a very important tactical error. In order for Mr. Tolivar to be appointed,his wife, who was the newly elected councilwoman, had to resign her two-year position. Her resignation was necessary to avoid a conflict of interest charge. Her seat had to be filled temporarily and came up for election in the following spring. Anglo councilmen openly vowed that they would "go after this appointment," but the newly elected Mexicano council felt they held the power and could do whatever they wanted. By using this state organization and a state law, the Anglos were able to force the Mexicano police chief out of office, as well as open for election a third council seat.

A second related tactical mistake that the Ciudadanos made during their first year of council control was in their choice of the mayoral candidate for the spring elections in 1973. One of the councilmen elected in 1972 decided to vacate his seat and run for the mayoral position. Consequently, this opened four of the seven council positions up for general election, instead of the two positions required for regular rotation. That made it possible for the Anglos to regain control of the council within one year, if they could get out the vote and sweep the 1973 elections. The only explanation that the

Mexicano candidates had for these moves, in retrospect, was the belief that they would win anyway. They conceded that both of these moves were serious tactical errors, perhaps due to overconfidence during their first year on the council.

There were several other key tactical moves during the campaign period that illustrate the skillful uses of laws and political tactics by the more experienced Anglos. First, the hold-over Anglo councilmen were able to stall an attempt of the city council to annex a large Mexicano residential section containing more than a hundred votes. The vote on this issue was postponed several times for lack of information, technical irregularities in the survey plot, and improper procedures for annexation. When it ultimately came to a vote, the Mexicanos did not have a majority and the issue was tabled until after the elections. Second, one Anglo school board candidate persuaded a Mexican-American employee to run as a third candidate to split the Ciudadanos vote. That tactic helped divert some of the Mexicano vote from the opposing Ciudadanos candidate for this position. Finally, and most important, the BGL worked very hard to organize their neighborhoods. Blocks were assigned to members who organized telephone committees and set up transportation facilities on election day. Many voters were called four and five times by BGL members, and supporters encouraged them to "get to the polls and beat La Raza."

The election campaign conducted by Ciudadanos, on the other hand, was directed exclusively toward mobilizing Mexicanos. Activity centered around educating new Mexicano voters to read and use the ballot. Radio spots in Spanish communicated the idea that the Mexicanos were in the majority, which meant that they should govern themselves. They argued that the Anglos were a minority that had governed too long, and that only Mexicano leaders would help their community acquire adequate and better streets, drainage, sewers, housing, parks, jobs and education. Several rallies were held in the park near the Catholic church and some of the more active women and candidates spent several weekends campaigning from door-to-door. Most Ciudadanos' Mexicanos acknowledged, however, that they lacked the time and money to conduct a strong and organized campaign.[15]

As a result of the intensive Anglo mobilization and the relative disorganization among the Ciudadanos Mexicanos, the Anglos swept the elections, recapturing control of the city hall and electing two Anglo incumbents to the school board. The two Anglo school board candidates polled more than 1,000 votes in a heavy turnout (forty-five percent of the registered voters). In the city election, the Ciudadanos candidate for mayor, an incumbent councilman, narrowly defeated the Anglo candidate, a retired army officer, by a vote of 1,042 to 981 (fifty-five percent of the registered voters). The Anglo candidates for councilman, however, narrowly defeated Ciudadanos candidates for the three vacant seats. Although Anglos regained voting control of the city council, they were still in a four to three minority on the school board.

Soon after the elections the Anglos called for a recount on the grounds of alleged voter irregularities. Approximately 170 votes declared invalid in the recount, and three months later the Anglo candidate for mayor was declared the winner. The Anglos then brought suit against a number of Mexicano voters, the city clerks who handled the absentee ballots, and their immediate superior, the mayor-elect, Mr. Matamoros. The district court appointed a local committee who selected a grand jury of local citizens to investigate the evidence of voter irregularities. These grand jury investigations took four more months and resulted in thirteen Mexicanos being fined $150 for various voting irregularities. The felony charges against the city clerks and the mayor-elect for allegedly tampering with the absentee ballots, were, however, dropped.

According to the court records, there were voting irregularities on both sides, but most of the errors were apparently attributed to Mexicanos. Some of the discrepancies encountered by the grand jury were: non-resident, non-registered alien or felon voters; name duplications; incorrect registration numbers; inaccurately marked ballot stubs; and erroneous absentee ballots. Further, some witnesses before the grand jury testified that they did not vote, but their names appeared on the ballots. Clearly, there were a number of incorrect procedural matters, and the questioning of witnesses, which several reported was a harrowing experience, primarily proved that many voters were inexperienced. It should also be noted that several BGL members, both Anglo and Mexican-American, served on the grand jury, but there were no Ciudadanos members on the grand jury. Most local Ciudadanos members considered the grand jury a highly illegal procedure and little more than a "kangaroo court" to punish and further frighten Mexicano voters.

Anglos in the BGL were not unanimous about the need for and political efficacy of prosecuting voters for these irregularities. A local car dealer, who was very popular with Mexicanos, expressed concern that the BGL may have gone too far. Several young Anglo businessmen and teachers also questioned the wisdom of "going after" what they considered uninformed voters. They saw this as an unnecessary act of vengeance. But several other key BGL leaders saw the legal action as a way to "teach the Raza Unida a lesson," to "break the back of this violent, illegal group." They key rationale for the election investigation was the notion that "it is the law" and "they must learn to abide the law." Anglos bent on upholding the morality and legality of their positions and punishing the immoral/illegal Ciudadanos' acts prevailed. The Anglo doubters went along with this strategy, because it was "right" and considered to be good political strategy.

Community Leadership in a Polarized Ethnic Context

After the election defeat of the Ciudadanos in the city council, the focus of the community conflict shifted to the school board.[16] Ciudadanos still retained a tenuous but potentially controlling four-to-three majority. As noted earlier, school board members of both ethnic groups and administrative personnel had developed good working relationships prior to the bitter campaign of 1973. The Board was making decisions on regular district matters such as taxation, budget, discipline, and personnel problems. It was also beginning to study and develop an experimental bilingual program and to recruit more Mexican-American teachers. Further, both groups agreed unanimously on issues such as student discipline and the dress code. Their unity was particularly evident in the case of the Board's rejection of a textbook which the teachers' textbook committee had recommended. One Anglo board member felt that the text did not present the United States government in an appropriate manner. The Ciudadanos Mexicanos, although critical of some aspects of American society, went along with the Anglos in rejecting this "liberal" textbook. Ultimately the old classic, MacGruder's American Government, also judged as rather liberal, was approved. Anglo and Mexicano board members generally agreed then, on most issues. The lone exception was one Anglo rancher who usually voted against the two more "liberal" Anglos and Ciudadanos members.

During the spring of 1973, both sides were increasingly drawn into more extreme positions. Mr. Esposito and Mr. Rápido, the school board members, were active in the community-wide political organization, but they were often perceived as too moderate and conciliatory in their actions on the school board. Likewise, at least two of the Anglos were quite active in the BGL from the beginning, one being adamant and the other more moderate. The third Anglo board member never did participate in the BGL and was able to remain fairly independent. The more moderate Anglo BGL member kept a low profile in the beginning stages of the BGL, and it was not evident to the

Mexicano board members that this person was active in the BGL. Active members of both the BGL and the Ciudadanos exerted considerable pressure upon all board members to be openly partisan and not to let the other side "get away with anything."

As the campaign developed, one of the Anglo board members up for re-election convinced the Mexicano board members of her neutrality and desire to represent both Anglos and Mexicanos. An understanding developed that Ciudadanos would not run an opposition candidate for her position. The Ciudadanos board members had a high regard for the skill of this particular Anglo and felt that no opposition was required. Consequently, two of the Ciudadanos board members reported making a strong appeal on the Anglo's behalf at the Ciudadanos meeting when the potential slate was discussed. The issue created a lively debate in Ciudadanos which continued for a number of weeks. The Mexicano board members eventually persuaded Ciudadanos to go along with this Anglo candidate.

Meanwhile, the filing deadline for candidates was approaching, and the Anglo, being under pressure from fellow Anglos, reported becoming very nervous. The filing deadline fell on the same day that several board members were scheduled to visit the Aztlán City bilingual program. The Anglo candidates were worried that the Ciudadanos were using this trip as a tactic to get them out of town. The Anglos reasoned that while they were out of town, the Mexicanos would file late candidates to split the Anglo vote. Therefore, the Anglos arranged for a Mexican-American employee (a secretary) to file as an opposition candidate.

She would help split the Mexicano vote in case Ciudadanos decided to "double-cross" the Anglos and run an opposition candidate.[17]

The Ciudadanos board members interpreted this act as treason because they had openly supported the "supposedly liberal gringa" despite heavy criticism from their group. The other members of Ciudadanos were now able to say "you see, all gringos are alike, you can't trust any of them." After this event, there was a rapid movement toward separatism, and an increase in the number of Mexican-Americans who shared anti-Anglo sentiments. Suspicion towards all Anglos, including the "researchers," ran high, and those Ciudadanos members who had been "trusting," such as Mr. Esposito and Mr. Rápido, suffered a loss of face among Mexicanos. The Ciudadanos members often used this case as an illustration of the deceitful, racist character of all Anglos; consequently, a growing number of the Ciudadanos leaders, such as councilpersons Salinas and Tolivar, felt the need for a more aggressive anti-Anglo posture.

The first post-election school board meeting was devoted to reorganization. The former Anglo chairperson and the senior Ciudadanos member, Mr. Esposito, were nominated for the position of board chairperson. There were four Ciudadanos and three Anglo board members, but to everyone's amazement the Anglo candidate won. As the board meeting proceeded, Mr. Esposito and Mr. Rápido frantically passed notes to each other. After the meeting they expressed great dismay and anger. The Ciudadanos members had arranged to elect Mr. Esposito, but one of them broke rank and voted for the Anglo. Much later it was learned that the Mexicano dissenter apparently had a "grudge" against Mr. Esposito which was not expressed during their planning session. This event was often interpreted as an example of how Mexicanos work against themselves and how they were intimidated by Anglos. The Mexicano leaders lamented that successful political action was still undermined by Mexicanos "who do not know how to unite and vote for their own kind."

Whereas earlier school board meetings had been marked by cordiality between the two ethnic groups, the 1973 campaign created a clear polarization among board members. During the remainder of the 1973 school year, each school board meeting was analogous to a poker game; the competing groups revealed no emotion, and every issue called forth a series of maneuvers designed to gain control over each other. It was necessary to keep informed about the issues between meetings to understand the transactions during the meeting itself.

In response to the election of the Anglo board chairperson, the Ciudadanos members attempted to "impeach" the newly-elected Anglo in a subsequent meeting. Believing that their four votes were under control, Ciudadanos decided to unseat the Anglo chairperson. However, the chairperson skillfully bluffed the Mexicanos into backing down. A vote was called for, and the four Ciudadanos voted to "impeach" the Anglo, but the chairperson claimed that a two-thirds majority, not merely a simple majority, was required, in accordance with _Robert's Rules._ The chairperson called home and had a copy of _Robert's Rules of Order_ sent to the meeting so the section specifying a two-third majority could be cited. The Ciudadanos were out-maneuvered again. Later they learned that Robert's Rules was not binding upon the Board, since it had not formally adopted them. However, at the next meeting with an Anglo quorum the Board adopted Robert's Rules as binding.

As the conflict escalated, the Ciudadanos began openly characterizing the superintendent, several other administrators, and a number of Anglo teachers as racist. The earlier public confrontations over control of the city council had shifted to the school board where Ciudadanos still had a majority. The post-election board meetings were attended by a crowd (twenty to thirty people) of BGL observers, which Mexicanos perceived as a pressure tactic. The Ciudadanos attempted to counter this tactic by getting an equal number of Mexicanos to attend the board meetings. At several of the post-election meetings members of both groups had tape recorders. Anglos reportedly expected the Ciudadanos members to try to impeach the chairperson again, and they wanted to accurately document the proceedings in anticipation of a court case. The audience added tension to the meetings and apparently was effective at persuading Ciudadanos board members to stay away. One or two of the Ciudadanos members were frequently "busy" on the night of board meetings, which often left the board deadlocked.

One key event in late May illustrates the effectiveness of Anglo pressure on some of the Ciudadanos board members. The final, major act by the Ciudadanos to increase their control over the schools was to engineer the hiring of a "Chicano superintendent." By late May the Ciudadanos leaders were convinced that the Anglo superintendent was a weak "yes man," playing "both sides." They frequently said that he was more interested in "saving his skin than changing things for our Chicanitos." To bring in a "real Chicano," without arousing Anglos, they persuaded the assistant superintendent of Aztlán City to apply for a vacant directorship for federal programs. After he was in the school system, they planned to fire the Anglo superintendent and elevate him to the top position. The Anglos were quick to see through this ploy; however, while the superintendent and the board initially expressed a positive view of the Aztlán City candidate, they were busy developing better pressure tactics to force the Mexicano board members to absent themselves. The Ciudadanos' hopes of hiring the Aztlán City administrator and firing the Anglo superintendent were dashed when the board, minus two Ciudadanos members, hired a Mexican-American candidate from Laredo. The remaining Ciudadanos members attributed this to the tension-filled meetings which made their woman board member nervous and ill, and the tactic of "economic blackmail" used on still another member, the son of a prominent melon grower.

It appears that the use of economic pressure on one of the Ciudadanos board members effectively neutralized his vote. Mr. Talvez worked in partnership with his father in the largest local produce business. Their business was based on contract-buying of produce from producers in Mexico, the Rio Grande Valley, and the North Town areas. Anglos first attempted to use their contacts with the Mexicano's business associates in Mexico and the Valley to influence the Mexicano board member. This approach failed, so one of the Anglo school board members refused to re-lease a large tract of land to Mr. Talvez' father. The father reported spending several hours attempting to dissuade the Anglo landowner. He was told that the only way the land would be re-leased was if the father could convince his son to "vote right" on the school board. The father reportedly refused, saying that his son was a man in his own right and could not be influenced. Despite the refusal, it is noteworthy that the son became conspicuously absent from school board meetings, which caused a voting dead-lock of three Mexicanos and three Anglos.

Eventually, the Mexican-American board members could not withstand the increased intimidation and countered by boycotting meetings. Thus, the board lacked a quorum; school business that required Board action was stalled so that the emerging Anglo control of the board was blocked. On one occasion the superintendent lamented the fact that the board had not met for three months (the summer period), and business was stacked up. During the post-election period only business vitally necessary for school maintenance was accomplished. At one point late that summer the school system still needed board approval to hire some fifteen or twenty teachers. It should be noted, however, that despite these problems, the school year began relatively smoothly, and the board began to function again in the fall of 1973.

The Increasing Politicization of Mexicano Community Leaders

The change in ethnic relations stimulated by the election of 1973 led the Ciudadanos board members to redefine past board issues. An example of this was the textbook rejection case, discussed earlier. Although the Ciudadanos had supported the Anglos for a more "patriotic" text, they now believed that Anglos were really choosing texts to keep Mexicano students ignorant. The Ciudadanos members stated that they would be suspicious the next time Anglos wanted to reject a text, for this would probably mean that the text had something that would enhance Mexican students' understanding of the Anglo system.

The school board leaders Mr. Esposito and Mr. Rápido became convinced that Anglo control of schools would have to be broken completely. Whereas they previously believed that the present Anglo administration was sympathetic enough to promote Mexican-American needs, they gradually came to the conclusion that a "Chicano administration" was necessary. They felt that changes would not be forthcoming until the school was predominately Chicano. A Chicano superintendent would actively recruit Mexicano administrative assistants and teachers, who would produce the needed curricular changes. They supported this line of reasoning by pointing to the proposed bilingual program. Anglos were perceived to be procrastinating in introducing such a program. Earlier cooperation on the program was now perceived as "a trick by the Anglos to buy us off."

Although Ciudadanos members had initially discussed mobilizing the students, they did not pursue the idea, primarily at the insistence of the Mexicano priest, Father Reynaldo. The Ciudadanos school board leaders generally shared the BGL position that "politics should be kept out of the schools." Still, local political conflicts manifested themselves in student behavior, even though Ciudadanos avoided politicizing students and the schools. This traditional belief about politics in the schools began to change during the 1973-1974 school year.

The events of that year forced the Anglo superintendent, the principals, and teachers into choosing sides or making concerted efforts to avoid any public political behavior.[18] Before the elections the superintendent contended that he had open, friendly, and confidential relationships with at least three of the four Ciudadanos board members. Early interviews with the Mexicano board members as well as observations of their interaction with the superintendent substantiated his contentions. But as the ethnic conflict escalated, the superintendent gradually became estranged from the Ciudadanos board members. Leaders from both groups constantly placed the superintendent in situations where he had to choose sides. After the attempt to bring in the Aztlán City Chicano administrator, the most outspoken Ciudadanos board member, Mr. Esposito, told the superintendent that they wanted to fire him. They reportedly accused him of siding with the gringos and dragging his feet. The separation between the superintendent and the Ciudadanos board members widened until both believed the other to be the enemy.

The superintendent's attempt to maintain neutrality often caused him to vacillate. Teachers and other administrators interpreted this as a sign of "weakness." Administrators, staff, and teachers were nearly unanimous in their perception of the superintendent as a "puppet" of the school board. There was general consensus that the superintendent could not be counted on for support in case of problems with the school board or the local citizenry. The superintendent privately described his situation as extremely delicate and demanding. He agonized over the conflict, and during the tense 1973 school year he kept his options open and considered leaving. The Anglo board members put considerable pressure on him to stay, however, "to help straighten this mess out." As the BGL became increasingly strong and the Mexicanos increasingly "militant," the superintendent became more openly anti-Raza Unida. He considered the past Mexicano board members to be pretty "good ole' boys" who had been "led astray by the radicals." He considered the Raza Unida of Aztlán City extremely corrupt and claimed he could see its influence locally, "because the new Ciudadanos candidates are getting worse, closer to the bottom of the barrel, the more radical they get."

The principals and faculty generally maintained a neutral public position toward the community confrontations. There were nevertheless a few Anglo teachers married to active BGL members, and also several Mexicano administrators and teachers who were quietly supportive of the Ciudadanos organization. However, unless a particular event called a teacher or principal to the Board's attention, most school personnel tended to keep a low public profile. Many problems in the every day life of the schools, however, were related to the local conflicts. Principals and teachers were well aware of this and tried to avoid as many student confrontations as possible. One principal resigned at the end of the 1973 school year after he was caught between the two ethnic groups over a discipline issue. Another principal left North Town because he felt that the atmosphere created untenable working conditions.

Although the majority of teachers did not participate in the local political activities, many were quite concerned about possible consequences to themselves. Several teachers organized a local chapter of the Texas Classroom Teachers' Association (TCTA) as early as the fall of 1972. The school board interpret this action as a "power play by teachers." The actual purpose of the local chapter's organization was twofold. First, some teachers felt that they needed greater protection from what often seemed to be an arbitrary and unfair school board. The board reportedly dismissed several teachers for "mishandling" students. The TCTA organizers agreed that the teachers had acted improperly, but they questioned the board's refusal to give the accused teachers a hearing. The precedent was seemingly established that could lead to arbitrary dismissals. The state TCTA provides resources for a teacher's defense in cases where the teacher feels he or she is not fairly treated. Establishing a local chapter would thus provide some insurance during unstable times. Second, the local teachers were aware of what had taken place in Aztlán City and hoped the state TCTA would provide defense in case Chicanos took over the school board and began to "indiscriminately" fire Anglo teachers. This latter rationale for creating a local TCTA chapter illustrates the extent to which most local Anglo teachers initially shared the BGL beliefs about the Raza Unida.

The growing political conflict between Mexicanos and Anglos also affected students. The school administration and teachers recalled that during the spring elections of 1973 student discipline problems were above normal. Several examples were cited which support this notion. First, a band concert was presented by a South Texas University. The band had a large number of Mexican-American members, some of whom played solo numbers. The solo performances were exceptionally well done and a large number of the student responded by giving the soloist a standing ovation. However, some of the Mexicano students yelled "Viva La Raza!" and gave the Brown Power sign--a raised clinched fist. This disturbed the Anglo school leaders and local Anglo Board members. The initial reaction was a threat to cancel the remaining assemblies.

Second, the son of an Anglo businessman and BGL leader was "beaten up" by a Mexicano student. Anglos reported that the Mexican-American boy was encouraged by one of the Mexicano teacher-aides. However, the Mexican-American's account specifies that the Anglo boy was constantly "teasing" the teacher-aide. On this particular day the aide told the Anglo student to "go pick on that boy over there if you want to be so rough." The Anglo boy took the cue, and the Mexicano boy responded by "beating him up." The Anglo parents took their boy out of the school and placed him in a distant private school for the duration of the semester.

Another major conflict during the 1972-1973 school year involved the son of an Anglo rancher and several Mexican-Americans. The Anglo boy, a high school football player, initially beat up a Mexicano boy for dating an Anglo girl. The Anglo boy was disturbed that the Anglo girl was going out with a "Mexican dope freak," and he wanted to "protect her." The Mexicano youth was a popular "ladies man" who played in the band, had long hair, and drove around in his van. After several warnings, the Anglo youth beat the Mexicano youth up. This greatly angered a number of the Mexicano's friends who considered the fight unfair for several reasons: No Anglo had any business telling a Mexicano that he could not date an Anglo girl; that decision was up to the girl. Further, the fight was a mismatch because the Mexicano was not a "fighter type," and the Anglo was a rough football player. Finally, the Anglo provoked the fight because he was a "red-neck bigot who hated all Mexicans, and a bully who never picked on Mexicanos his own size."

Given this reasoning, several of the Mexicano boy's buddies, who were "real batos," "fighter types" jumped the Anglo in the school halls and beat him up. The main Mexicano offender, who was frequently in trouble with the school officials, was suspended for the remainder of the semester, but the Mexicanos considered this a victory. They pointed out that none of the Anglo passers-by came to his rescue, which showed that Anglos really had no solidarity. The Anglos reported, however, that they considered the beating a typical "Mexican way of fighting," i.e., unfair, in gangs "like a pack of wolves." The incident apparently further crystallized the growing split between Mexicanos and Anglos, but no more fights broke out during the 1972-1973 school year.

Students from both groups were reported to be always watching to see "who was getting away with something." Both groups were constantly maneuvering for control of the school. Mexicano students reported several cases in which Anglo teachers attempted to encourage them to run for office. Mexicanos interpreted this as a traditional Anglo tactic to split the Mexicano vote. One Mexican-American teacher counseled Mexicano students to "get together" and not fall into that trap. Generally, however, it would be inaccurate to characterize daily student relations as filled with open aggression and fighting. The above incidents indicate the potential for violence and the tension that existed.

The Rise of the Raza Unida Party in the Fall of 1973

The election defeat in the spring of 1973 and the ensuing court proceedings against voters and the city clerks were bitter experiences for the Ciudadanos Mexicanos. Not only had they lost their newly acquired control of local institutions, but the Anglos had sought to punish them further by removing their only successful candidate, the first elected Mexicano mayor, Mr. Matamoros. Many Mexicanos regarded this final act as particularly ruthless and vindictive. The newly elected mayor was well-liked in the community, and it was common knowledge that his restaurant business had suffered during his attempt to win political office. The local Anglos, some of whom they had thought were friends had said, "we talk and you listen." The BGL Anglos had also used clever tactics and economic pressures to control the school board. Above all, they had used outside agencies, speakers, and legal technicalities to defeat Mexicano candidates. By the fall of 1973 the politically inexperienced Ciudadanos had learned a number of bitter lessons in the game of politics. They expressed extreme hatred for the BGL and Anglos and vowed to fight on in the spring elections of 1974.

The mood of bitterness was, however, also colored by frustration and confusion, and the Mexicanos stood willing to fight but uncertain as to who would lead and how they were to do battle. In the face of a seemingly confident, well-organized, and well-financed BGL, some Ciudadanos members were calling for different tactics. They felt that the trickery and deception of the Anglo could only be countered by organization and a stronger stance.

During the summer and fall of 1973 no single, persuasive, effective leader emerged, and no clear plan of action was developed.[19] Ciudadanos only formally met once during the fall of 1974, and the discussion revolved around discriminatory events which happened during the elections and which were happening in the local schools. The meeting turned out to be what one member called a "bitch session, which didn't do us no good. We still don't have an organization for the elections." Many of the key male leaders in the Ciudadanos were not present, and several women active in promoting improvements in the schools and local health programs led the discussion.

Although very little formal, large group activity was occurring, a number of important realignments were taking place. As indicated, the Ciudadanos organization originally grew out of a fusion of two informal Mexicano groups, the more moderate businessmen and professionals and the younger Raza Unida. From the inception of Ciudadanos these two groups had their differences, and open arguments and personal slights and remarks were common. The first officers of the Ciudadanos were all members of the more moderate group, but the two young council candidates in 1972 were generally sympathetic to many aspects of the Raza Unida approach in Aztlán City.

The key personalities which moved Ciudadanos toward affiliating with the Raza Unida Party were Alberto Salinas, a city councilman and grocery store owner, and Noel Ramírez, a vegetable farmer. These two young men became convinced that the only way the Ciudadanos would win against the BGL was to join the Raza Unida Party and come out more forcefully. The councilwoman and her husband, an unsuccessful candidate for sheriff as well as several other people originally considered more moderate also agreed with these emerging leaders. In effect, the smaller, less influential Raza Unida faction added some important new allies from within the larger Ciudadanos group. Paradoxically, however, the most militant, young Raza Unida members became less active in actual organizational matters. Two went back to college, two became involved with their farming activities, and the fifth, the lawyer-city manager, became disenchanted and concentrated on his managerial job with a local melon grower. Even the previously active councilwoman and her husband became less involved in planning strategy and organizing meetings.

The more active rank-and-file members, particularly several key women community workers and organizers became, however, more vocal about Ciudadanos joining Raza Unida. The more moderate but now disenchanted school board leaders, the Mexicano priest, and several prominent businessmen and professionals grumbled and complained about this drift towards a Raza Unida affiliation. They warned that a "radical approach would turn off" the average Mexicano who believed the "gringo stories about Raza Unida." Others expressed the feeling that it was a weak organization that really could do nothing for the North Town Ciudadanos. Some felt that Raza Unida was, in fact, too philosophically radical and "socialistic." They felt that taking over the county Democratic party made more political sense. The Democratic party-oriented Mexicanos were also less enthusiastic about the Raza Unida emphasis on Chicano culture and dialect. They questioned how such practices would help their children get ahead as much as education, mastery of English, and business acumen.

The dissenting moderates expressed their views mainly in private meetings, however. They remained a disorganized, silent, somewhat confused mixture of people. They could not deny the Raza Unida advocates' charges that the gringos had "played unfairly" and had "bullied and fooled the inexperienced Mexicanos." The moderates had erred by trusting the gringos and had been "made to look like fools," hence they tended to remain silent. They grumbled about how Salinas and Ramírez were trying to "take over Ciudadanos" and "to call a secret meeting to form the Raza Unida Party." Reluctantly, the moderates began to withdraw from active leadership positions, and the energetic Mr. Salinas and Mr. Ramírez worked hard to organize sentiment for a new party.

The meeting to form the Raza Unida Party on November 15th was poorly attended (thirty-five to forty people) compared to earlier Ciudadanos meetings (a hundred plus people). Nearly all of the formerly active members of the original Raza Unida faction were present. The key women community leaders active in politics and sympathetic towards Raza Unida were also there. Only six or eight of the original, more moderate school leaders and businessmen attended. The meeting began with the presentation of several speakers from the Atzlán City Raza Unida. One womam organizer gave an inspiring speech about the rights of Chicanos and the role that Raza Unida was playing in that struggle. She emphasized the need for a third party, an all-Mexican party. She was followed by two other party leaders who spoke briefly on the successes of Raza Unida statewide and in Aztlán City. They emphasized the many government grants and new programs they were able to obtain.

Finally, the leader of the party, José Angel Gutiérrez, also spoke. His entrance was very dramatic, and the North Town group clearly expressed admiration and enthusiasm for him. He spoke of the Mexicano having the pantalones to fight for his rights and illustrated the Raza Unida's willingness to fight the gringos with stories of victories in the courts and in the elections. The North Town Ciudadanos members asked several questions about how to organize and convince people who were still scared of the Raza Unida. Little practical advice was given, but the Aztlán City Raza leaders did encourage them to overcome such obstacles. After about one hour of discussion and speeches, the North Town Ciudadanos elected Noel Ramírez, the active young farmer, their county chairman. He proceeded to ask who was in favor of joining Raza Unida. There was no discussion, and it appeared that everyone was at least in tacit agreement. It seemed that the act of joining Raza Unida was perceived as an inevitable event, not really a question for debate. The crowd was generally optimistic about the change. After the meeting, the North Town and Aztlán City Raza mingled together, joked and talked for a few minutes. The North Town Ciudadanos Unidos, approximately one and one/half years later, had formally become what key Anglo leaders were labeling them since 1972, the Raza Unida Party. What importance this would have in the coming election remained the big question in the minds of many local Mexicano and Anglo leaders.

The reactions to this formal announcement of becoming Raza Unida Party were varied in the community. As indicated, the moderates and the original radicals began retreating to the political sidelines. The moderates retreated for a variety of reasons, but mainly because they felt that going openly Raza Unida was "bad politics" and "would lose votes." The original "radicals," having "converted" others to do the organizing and persuading of the masses, withdrew to their jobs and businesses. Some "radicals" expressed disillusion with local Mexicanos for being pendejo (stupid) or flojo (lazy) and afraid of fighting. It was, therefore, a waste of their energy to fight for a people who were too timid and apathetic to fight for themselves.

Others expressed a satisfaction, something of an "I-told-you-so" view of the failure of moderates who trusted gringos.

It was in this atmosphere, a time of divided leadership, confusion, and changing feelings that Ciudadanos evolved into a chapter of the Raza Unida Party. On the one hand the Mexicanos were attempting to become more openly assertive, and on the other hand many of these same leaders were profoundly pessimistic about their chances of winning. The BGL appeared strong, united, and difficult to defeat. The Raza lacked money, experienced leaders and unity. Born of this ambivalence and in the wake of defeat, the new Raza Unida Party vowed to carry the fight to the gringo enemy.

Chapter 6

Community Factionalism and the Decline of the Raza Unida

By the fall of 1973 the conflict between the "La Raza" and the Better Government League intensified. As the battle for political control of North Town unfolded, many events gave the conflict continuing life. As one old-timer put it, "this thing has a kind of life of its own. Maybe we can't stop what we started 'til it just runs out of gas." A number of issues continued to engender resentments among the Mexicanos. The grand jury investigation of voters stood out as the most vivid show of Anglo force. The fate of other community improvements proposed by Ciudadanos such as a city park, improved street drainage, and a "free" health clinic were also continuing points of conflict. Other BGL moves to bar Mr. Salinas, a Raza Unida councilman, from the ballot, to petition the removal of Father Reynaldo, and to supervise the EODC Center/Head Start Program also carried the fight to La Raza.

Finally, other unintended events, many concerning school policies, fed the conflict. Yet, life in North Town from 1973 to 1974 is a story of both escalating and declining conflict.[1] No discussion of the second cycle of conflict would be complete without describing the people, events, and forces that curbed the conflict. There were times when the decisions made by BGL and Raza Unida leaders created dissension and factionalism within their groups. Gradually, various conciliatory moves, the internal dissension within each group, and a growing exhaustion from discord slowed the escalating conflict or "helped it run out of gas."

Key Points of Continuing Community Conflict

While the Ciudadanos controlled the city council in 1972-1973, they initiated a study for using approximately six acres of municipal land as a city park. The plan was to apply for money from the regional government council to develop this area further. Ciudadanos favored this site because it was near the Mexicano population, and it would cost less to build. They wanted a relatively large park where traditional Mexicano family reunions, outdoor barbecues, and celebrations of Mexican holidays could be held. A park big enough to hold a large number of the community could also be used for political rallies.

Although BGL Anglos opposed the park for various reasons, the main reason was ostensibly that the park site was too close to the town sewage plant. They argued that this might create an unpleasant odor on windy days. They also contended that it was too far from town (approximately one mile) to walk there. Privately, BGL leaders disliked the idea of a large park because it might be used for political rallies. They generally preferred developing several mini-parks in various sections of the Westside with the emphasis on children's recreational and playground facilities. One of the school sites was proposed, as were several other near-by private lots.

During the 1973-1974 period no specific developments occurred; however, the new BGL-controlled city council and the new city manager did begin plans to use federal revenue sharing monies for developing the school site. They planned for playground equipment and a basketball court. The city, the school board, and the county also began making plans to improve the old WPA swimming facilities at the junior high school and to build several new city tennis courts. In a related recreation program, The Little League Association, a predominantly Anglo group, fenced and improved the high school baseball field for a summer baseball program. Plans for a large park to accommodate picnickers, festivals, and political rallies were dropped, however. Among the Raza Unida leaders this remained an important issue. They realize that these Anglo programs were "good for our kids," but nevertheless, they saw the projects as "attempts to buy us off, to make us think they give a damn about us."

The second major issue which has plagued North Town leaders since the early fifties was the problem of drainage on the westside of town. The town was originally built so that the eastside, the main business district and predominately Anglo section, was on higher ground. "Mexican Town" was somewhat lower in elevation and was located at the base of a natural water shed; consequently, approximately 500 acres of surrounding farmland also drained into the westside. Rainstorms sent torrents of water down approximately one-third of the streets on the westside. The drainage problem was surveyed by an outside company in the mid-fifties, but the proposal for a new storm and sewer system was never acted upon due to the high cost. Periodically, Mexicano residents in that area complained to the city council, so that by 1965 another survey and plan was developed. By this time the cost had sky-rocketed, and the council was more reluctant to commit the city to heavy indebtedness and increased taxes.

In 1968 the solution of paving a large number of the streets in the poorly drained areas was proposed and acted upon. Since residents must pay for the paving costs, this method was seen as the most economical solution to the drainage problem. But as a large number of the streets were paved in this area, the problem was compounded. The concrete streets did allow the water to run off somewhat faster, but it also turned a number of streets into fast-flowing streams during the height of rain storms. Residents claimed that the water rose much higher and was more destructive after the paving.

The Ciudadanos-controlled city council began preliminary planning on the drainage problem in 1972, but no programs were initiated. In the fall of 1973 the BGL-controlled city council continued the discussion over the drainage problem. The first of two public meetings was well attended by Raza Unida supporters. A great deal of criticism was leveled at the council for not solving the problem. Several leaders made impassioned speeches, which the Anglos present labeled as political propaganda and campaigning. The meeting became rather heated, and was reminiscent of school board meetings. It was subsequently announced that the engineering firm that did the second survey in 1965 would present the original plan and several feasible alternatives at a special council meeting.

Consequently, during the second meeting the engineering firm brought a Mexican-American engineer to explain the plan in English and Spanish. The meeting was sparsely attended (fifteen to twenty people), and the Raza Unida leaders purposely stayed away to express their disapproval of the plan. Several Mexicano property owners from the affected area did come to express their concerns and to ask questions. The meeting was a relatively short (one hour), simple presentation of the view that the only practical, economical solution was an open, cement run-off canal. The canal would cost approximately $400,000 and would go through thirty or forty homeowners' lots. The possibility of an underground drainage system was rejected as prohibitively expensive for such a small area. Underground facilities would have reportedly cost three to four times as much as the canal. The council further discussed the possibility of applying for regional government federal funds to cover the bulk of the construction expenses. Since North Town had not previously applied for such grants, the council was optimistic about getting up to $300,000 to finance the project. The meeting ended with very little controversy and the general agreement to explore the canal solution further.

Predictably, the Raza Unida strongly criticized the plan, not only as hazardous to Mexicano children, but also as damaging to the rights of many property owners. It was not clear how many houses would have to be completely relocated, nor how many lots would lose backyards. But given the density of housing in the area, many local Mexicano leaders and residents of the area considered the canal a very poor solution. The city manager and council contended that such disruptions and relocations could be minimized, but very few Raza Unida supporters believed such optimistic predictions.

Most present BGL leaders lamented the fact that the leaders of the late forties and early fifties did not solve the problem when the city's indebtedness was low and construction costs were cheaper. Many local residents complained about the conditions, but after twenty years of flooding, they have partially accepted the periodic inconveniences. Only a dramatic turn for the worse, such as relocation and property possession might rekindle the issue. Fearing such community reaction, North Town leaders were moving slowly on this issue. The drainage problem may remain unsolved, barring a major windfall of outside funds.

The third major public policy issue concerned the development of a free medical clinic. Several active Mexicanos, led by Ms. Amalia Tovar, planned to build a clinic and hire two National Health Corps doctors. The group, called El Sacrificio, held several community meetings to explain the need and benefit to local citizens. They also gathered materials about similar federal programs in the area. In 1972 they presented a proposal to the Economic Opportunity Development Corporation Board to use federal grant monies to build their clinic. Their basic argument was that local health care was expensive and woefully inadequate. They were very critical of the two local Anglo doctors, whom they considered professionally incompetent. Countless tales were told of misdiagnosis, indifference, and insensitivity to Mexicano culture.

The Ciudadanos leaders wanted Chicano doctors and a free clinic, but such programs required the approval of local health authorities, the county health officer and the county medical association. In 1972 the local doctor who served as the county health officer refused to certify such a request, and the group was unable to get a contradictory evaluation from the other doctors and pharmacists in North County. Consequently, the EODC board could not sponsor such proposals for a health clinic and National Health Corps doctors. The Ciudadanos frequently cited this issue as an example of Anglo greed and racism, and used it to arouse Mexicano voters. But by the 1973-1974 campaign the health issue and El Sacrifício were dead and rarely mentioned. Increasingly local residents have taken their health problems to a new Mexicano doctor in a nearby town and to a private hospital in another town in the county.

North Town, like so many small American towns, has always had serious problems providing good medical care. In the thirties and forties they had a clinic over the city hall and a private hospital in the present day nursing home. But when their traditional country doctor retired, the town was left without a permanent doctor and hospital facility for several years. By 1960 the town was able to attract two new doctors, who along with a number of prominent business and farming families, built a small private hospital. The new doctors developed their own clinics and also periodically used the hospital. The North County Hospital has been underutilized, however, and it has gradually become a kind of nursing home, housing some patients on a semi-permanent basis.[2]

North Town Anglos were also privately critical of the local Anglo doctors. Stories of incorrect diagnosis were frequent, and one of the doctors was particularly criticized for his "poor bedside manner." Several prominent Anglos conceded that they "would not dream of going to a local doctor for anything serious." They confided that most Anglos who could afford it went to a nearby city. Nevertheless, many BGL Anglos felt that having these national doctors was a form of welfare socialism. Others felt that the only doctors who would join such programs were probably incompetent. A more privately held reason for rejecting the El Sacrifício plan was its political implications. Local BGL leaders were extremely sensitive to the Aztlán City Raza Unida plan for a health care clinic. Several of them pointed out that "this program of Gutiérrez's to give free health care to La Raza supporters, with his wife running the program, was a good way to win votes with federal money." The Anglo leaders were determined to block any La Raza accomplishments that would "dupe the poor Mexican voters into believing only La Raza was trying to help them."

It should be added, however, that by 1975 North Town had National Health Corps doctors. A year later, after the political battle had been won and La Raza vanquished, the county medical official, a leader in the BGL, approved a similar program. The major difference from the El Sacrifício program was that the Health Corps doctors would be based at the private North County Hospital. There would be no clinic on the Mexicano side of town.

Combating the La Raza Threat

The Better Government League continued to confront the La Raza movement, seeking to defeat, and discredit its leaders and programs. Their most direct action during the fall of 1973 was a legal challenge to Councilman Salinas' right to run for re-election. They did not place his name on the official ballot because his residence was outside the city limits. The case was ultimately taken to the State Supreme Court by the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), and the court ruled that Councilman Salinas had filed properly for candidacy. He was reinstated on the ballot in time for the spring elections, but the case undoubtedly occupied a great deal of the time and organizational energies of the new Raza Unida leaders. This action came on the heels of indictments of illegal voters and charges of city corruption. The Raza leaders felt that the Anglos were bent on destroying them. The incumbent Ciudadanos leaders were further goaded into taking stronger stands, identifying more closely with the Aztlán City Raza Unida. This was particularly true of the fiery Salinas whose personal right to run had been challenged.

Another source of great irritation to Ciudadanos leaders in the fall of 1973 was an organized effort to "get rid of Father Reynaldo." The priest, a young liberal Mexican-American, was considered to be the "real leader" of La Raza. Many Anglos reasoned that Mexicanos unquestionably followed their priest. Further, Father Reynaldo had actually spoken out during church sermons about racial discrimination, inequality, and hatred in North Town. Anglo church members were incensed by this "use of the pulpit to espouse La Raza ideals." Some refused to attend services, others vowed to have this "political priest" thrown out or transferred. The most notable Anglo Catholic who opposed Father Reynaldo was a prominent doctor and former city councilman. Doctor Olson, himself married to a Puerto Rican, had personally initiated improvements of the lighting and streets near the Catholic church. Although not personally active in the BGL, the doctor and his wife helped circulate a petition requesting Bishop Flores to remove Father Reynaldo. Most Anglo Catholics had little hope that Bishop Flores, perceived as a La Raza supporter, would be sympathetic, but their dismay and anger moved them to try and influence him.

The efforts of Anglos to "smear the good name of Father Reynaldo" outraged many Raza Unida leaders. They also circulated a petition in support of Father Reynaldo and sought to influence higher church authorities to keep him in North Town. Many Mexicanos perceived this oppostion to Father Reynaldo as the lowest and most vengeful of all Anglo political tactics. They considered their priest a restraining voice during the turbulence of 1972 and 1973. He had clearly spoken out against racism and injustice, and had encouraged Ciudadanos members to stand up for their rights and elect their own leaders. He had also worked a great deal with the youth group, encouraging similar ideals. However, none of the Ciudadanos or Raza Unida leaders considered him a part of the inner circle, a key leader or decision-maker, and neither did Father Reynaldo. That he should be labeled as such, and perhaps be forced out of town for being "too radical," seemed absurd to most Mexicanos. As one leader reasoned, "you see, you see what you get for being a moderate, for not hating and fighting, you get what Father is going to get; you get run out of town because of your goodness. We have to stop these goddamn gringos from doing this."

As the issue evolved, Father Reynaldo was indeed transferred in the spring of 1974, but apparently this decision was made long before either side sent the petitions or made him an issue. He was reassigned to a seminary in Arkansas as an instructor and trainer of other priests. He personally expressed sadness about leaving, but both he and his superiors apparently saw this as an even more important role for him. In his three years in North Town he had helped revive the youth groups and several long dormant community celebrations such as the Diez y Seis de Septiembre. He had actively participated in the community and was a part of the growing social and political change. The consolation that one Raza Unida leader found in his departure was the hope that he would "train so many priests like himself that these gringos won't be able to send them all away." By the spring elections, then, Father Reynaldo was no longer an issue.

A third sequence of incidents that was widely interpreted as more Anglo vengeance centered around the federally-sponsored Head Start program. Up until the fall of 1973 all of the EODC programs were housed in a previously condemned elementary school complex.

The building was the original segregated "Mexican school." As indicated, the various EODC programs (family planning, the credit union, Head Start, and surplus commodities) were reluctantly accepted in North Town. Gradually the director, a Mexicano and formerly an insurance salesman, gained control of the EODC board. As in many other cases, these federally-sponsored citizens' boards (1/3 civic leaders, 1/3 elected officials, and 1/3 low income citizens) became the site of considerable political jockeying. The former director said, "It took me four years to get the kind of people on there that would work for La Raza, but we finally did it."

In 1973 the EODC center employed a number of the key Ciudadanos political organizers as directors of the service programs, field workers, cooks and janitors. The director of Head Start and a portion of his staff could also be considered "pro-Ciudadanos," although none were openly active in local politics. The director was especially careful in avoiding "politics," and he prided himself in being a professional educator. In general, however, the entire EODC program was openly and quite obviously a major site for North Town political activity. Much "political plotting" and discussion went on there, and this outside federal program was an irritating symbol of "Chicano power" and federal welfarism. Many BGL leaders expressed resentment towards the center and were frustrated by their inability to end these programs.

The EODC center never was actually a formal center or meeting place for Ciudadanos. Neither was it ever a place where the key

Ciudadanos or Raza Unida leaders planned their strategy. As in the case of the BGL, most such activities went on in the homes of leaders, in some cafes, and in rented public halls. In the fall of 1973 a new director of the EODC center was appointed, and he proceeded to move the main administrative offices to his hometown in the southern part of the county. To some extent, even the informal political discussions and activities were on the decline in the fall of 1973 because of this shift in administrative offices.

However, the local school board had become increasingly disenchanted with the way Head Start was utilizing their facility. During the fall, and particularly during the spring before the elections, the school board increased their surveillance of the center. During a Head Start meeting in February the Head Start director described what he considered increasing political harassments:

> Last Saturday the parents and the teachers were working in the playground when Mrs. Hart (president of the school board) and Mr. Wayne (superintendent) arrived. They stayed for awhile in the car watching us from afar. Then they entered the building and started to go to each room. Graziela was making coffee for the parents; she saw them and went to tell me about it. I and the parents came into the building and asked Mr. Wayne, "Qué pasó?"(what's up?) I knew that rumors were going around that the Head Start center was a hotbed of activities for Raza Unida and that food and materials were coming out of it for the political rally. So we knew more or less why they were there. Mr. Wayne, seeing all the parents and being confronted by me, chickened out and said something about wanting to know if there were any handicapped children in the community for they were going to have a program for special education next semester. Then they left. Monday morning I received a letter from Mr. Wayne. At first it looked like a very innocent letter, but once you read between the lines, it meant more than what was really said. I was very angry and wrote a long letter in reply. But by

> Tuesday afternoon several Raza Unida people approached me saying they had to present this case to the school board meeting. I went to that meeting but nothing happened, since the meeting was taken up by some case of Anglo kids drinking beer and getting kicked out of school. So I sent my letter to Mr. Wayne and also a very violent letter to our director for Head Start programs so he would know of this and help fight for our program.

This is the letter that Superintendent Wayne sent to the Director of the North Town Head Start program:

> As local taxes increase, as political activities intensify, and as the energy crisis worsens, our School System comes under close scrutiny from the general public. Some of the Board Members and Administrators often receive telephone calls at night, or on weekends, regarding activities going on at various schools, lights left on in certain buildings, the use of school buses, etc. The activities of the various school campuses are scheduled on the School Master Calendar so we know what is going on, where, and when.
>
> If you will be so kind, please notify Mr. Cordova or the Superintendent's office when you have night or weekend activities planned with your groups, so we can get the activities of our Old Westside Elementary facility on our calendar also.
>
> I found an extra copy of the Board Policy regarding the use of all school facilities and included it for your review. You may keep it for your files.

In response the director of the Head Start program wrote the following letter to the Superintendent of Schools of North Town:

> I am answering your letter of February 25, 1974, a letter which on the surface appeared very innocent but which seemed to be trying to tell me something else between the lines; an accusation of misuse of my duties and responsibilities as Head of the North Town Head Start center.
>
> I am irked, Mr. Wayne, by the fact that you did not level with me last Saturday morning when you and the lady board member came around checking our center thinking that some type of political cooking was going on. I was well aware of your reasons for being there, and as you well saw that our activities turned out to be a parent volunteer group who had someone to fix the Head Start's Children playground.

I consider the letter an insult to my intelligence, that you would actually think me so naive to allow the future and welfare of sixty poor children and ten employees to be put in jeopardy by sidestepping guidelines and policies to serve my own political interests and those of other groups interested in change. I feel no one on my staff nor I have to put ourselves in jeopardy; for change is coming whether we want to accept it or not.

My dedication has been to nothing else but the success of the North Town Head Start Center. My staff and I have labored and slaved through thick and thin; through situations such as this, in an effort to have something to offer to all the poor children of this community who don't get all the breaks that other people do.

There are a lot of people who would like to see our success terminated, for whatever selfish, egotistical or envious reasons -- I don't know. Therefore, I am surprised, somewhat shocked, that a lot of board members have fallen for such wagged tongued slanderous gossip and accusations of our conducting unauthorized activities and misusing government property in our Head Start Center.

I would like to point out that our activities have never been secret, that in fact all parents of the children are made aware of any activity taking place at the center, either by notes to the parents or on the radio station. Our office is open to the people and any information wished about any activity, may be given them at their request.

Board members should be well aware, by now, that Head Start programs have to comply with stiffer rules, regulations, and demands than the school system; so it is not uncommon that the activities of the center have to go beyond the regular forty working hours of other people. We have to have more parents meetings than the school system and there are several committees that have to meet at my request, whether they be scheduled or unscheduled, and that includes Saturdays and Sundays if we need to.

As for the lights left on in our building, that has probably been me working overtime on Head Start matters, or checking the building for vandalism damage, but I guess a lot of people wouldn't understand what it is to try to keep a constant vigil on a salvaged condemned building. I am the only one who has the keys to the Head Start side of the building -- so if anyone wants

> to question the integrity of my work or the authenticity of my story, all you need do is look around the center to see what has been done up to date in our center, or better yet, ask any parent from our community participants.
>
> Please believe me, Mr. Wayne, and to whom it may concern, we are not trying to be a threat to you nor anyone else; just don't short change our little people justly or unjustly, for whatever reason.

After this exchange of letters, there was apparently no official action taken. The conflict was followed by an incident concerning the Head Start toilets. Upon moving into these condemned buildings, the Head Start staff requested that their toilets be painted. When only one was painted the staff decided to paint "those ugly army barracks grey toilets." They selected bright yellows and greens and reds and added big pictures of birds, cars, and sunshine. During the summer of 1974, however, the elementary principal in charge of their building, the first Mexicano teacher and principal in North Town, requested them to repaint the toilets the original color. The principal told the Head Start director that the board and he felt the colors were too bright and would hurt the children's eyes. In response to these events the staff and a few parents had another heated discussion. One parent suggested that the "gringos must be dying to torture us all, even our children, if these toilets offend them." Another parent and active Raza Unida organizer delivered an impassioned speech that characterized the group's sentiment:

> Do you know what that means in plain simple words? It means que Wayne tiene la pata en el cuello de Manuel. Si él dice: brinca Manuel, Manuel tiene que brincar

> (that Wayne has his foot on Manuel's neck. If he says jump,Manuel, Manuel has to jump), not because he wants to hold on to his job but because he wants the Head Start to go on. He has to submit himself to the whims of the school board. So he needs your support. If the school board tells him to move out of here, there will be no more Head Start. So you better start doing something now. It is for your own interest.

Unintended Pre-Election Conflicts of 1973-74

The conflicts over the councilman, the priest, and the EODC center were, in varying degrees, conscious efforts by Anglo leaders to crush *La Raza*. There were also several other incidents that occurred in the schools which appeared to Mexicanos to be conscious aggression but were not. Rather, these incidents were oversights or unintended blunders by local officials, happenings that added unplanned fuel to the conflict.[3] Such "brushfires" caused consternation among Anglo leaders who had to scramble and explain these seeming Anglo prejudices towards "innocent Mexican students."

The first incident occurred in the fall during the student elections of class officers. Bickering broke out in the sophomore class, and the Anglo students threatened to boycott the elections because they felt that getting Anglos elected was hopeless. The teachers convinced them to participate anyway and pleaded with the general group to be fair and give everyone a chance. As in the recent past, the Mexicanos controlled these elections through block voting for selected Mexicanos. The great majority of the officers elected were either the children of Raza Unida leaders or were friends and members of the group. In effect, the student elections became another expression of the adult political conflict. The Raza Unida party leaders were as delighted at the outcome as the BGL leaders were dismayed. The Mexicanos pointed to their children with pride that they no longer tolerated Anglo privilege and control at the high school.

These elections also aroused considerable Mexicano criticism of the school administration. The controversy centered on the removal of two popular Chicano athletes from the ballots. On election day the names of the students were missing from the ballot, but there was no explanation why. Since the Raza-oriented students had organized the student body to vote for them, it appeared that the administration had acted arbitrarily and against Raza Unida. In fact, the two students were ineligible because they had not maintained the necessary seventy grade average for being a class officer. The administration and the teachers handling the election appear to have made two errors. First, many students and parents were unaware of any eligibility rule. Second, the administration apparently did not actually check the grade averages and make their decision until just a few hours before the elections. Consequently, a great deal of miscommunication existed about why and how the two boys were removed from the ballot. Afterwards, the school board received numerous complaints, and they eventually made a public statement explaining the eligibility rule. Students and parents gradually accepted the results of the election, but it became a common topic of discussion. Literally hundreds of Mexicanos used it as a symbol of Anglo disregard for their rights.

Following the student elections incident was "the homecoming affair." As is customary in most high schools, a homecoming queen and court are elected by the student body, and they are presented during a half-time ceremony. For the first time in the history of the school all the girls selected were Mexicano, except for one black, who was popular among the Mexican-American students. Traditionally, the school obtained a convertible from the local car dealers to chauffeur the girls around the field before the grandstands. This year, however, the queen and her court simply walked down the center of the field to the coronation stand.

During these ceremonies the recently disposed Mexicano mayor ran up and with tears in his eyes said:

> Do you see, Doctor, do you see what they do to our children? We are made to walk. We are not good enough to ride in their goddamn convertibles. But when those girls were white you can bet that their feet never touched the ground. Now you can understand the problem we have here.

Many other students and community members expressed similar sentiments. The story was picked up by the Chicano Times. They described it as an outrageous act of discrimination and urged that racist North Town schools be taken over by Chicanos.[4] This incident aroused strong feelings and local Mexicanos quickly believed the worst about the intentions of Anglo school leaders.

The explanation of the high school principal and the teacher-sponsors was that they simply forgot to make the arrangements. The teacher in charge was extremely embarrassed, apparently there had been no intention to deny the Mexicano girls a car. The Anglo board members were angry that the incident happened because "the Raza Unida made some real political hay out of this one, and we got nothing but another lump on our head." Along with the unexplained removal of two Chicanos from the student elections, this incident kept students at the high school polarized and resentful. Anglo students had been denied their past privileges as officers and homecoming queens, and Mexicanos had been denied a popular leader and a convertible to ride in triumphantly.

Later in the spring one other incident at the junior high school also created considerable controversy. The question was whether or not Mexicano students had the right to wear Raza Unida buttons. The junior high principal thought not, and he proceeded to "crack down." Several teachers took buttons off the students, and the principal gave a long, impassioned lecture to the student council, which consisted almost entirely of children of party leaders. He compared the Raza Unida to Nazi and communistic movements that threatened freedom and the American way of life. By the next morning an angry delegation of twenty parents demanded that the superintendent either muzzle or fire this man. The school board quickly responded by rescinding this principal's unilateral action, noting that they intended to follow recent court decisions bearing on students' freedom of speech. In the process, the principal, from the perspective of many teachers, was publicly "drawn-and-quartered" in a meeting where he was forced to apologize to the Raza Unida party leaders.

None of the aforementioned conflicts entirely mobilized either group, but the cumulative effect of these aggressive acts and unintended conflicts propelled each side to more organized, militant postures. Anglos frequently saw Mexicanos as breaking the laws of voting, school building use, and student elections. Mexicanos frequently felt the vengeance of legal authority and the blunders of struggling administrators. To an extent, the conflict took on dynamics of its own. It escalated, and each side was less and less willing to tolerate any hint of impropriety or inequality. Social and political conditions they had accepted in the past became increasingly intolerable.

Conciliation Towards the La Raza Threat

Along with being more combative toward the Raza Unida, the BGL also sought, however, to be more conciliatory. As indicated, the BGL was dedicated to "breaking the back of La Raza," but as the BGL became stronger through better organization and electoral victories, they also attempted to regulate the conflict. In effect, the BGL sought to win votes and support through more positive programs. They wanted to recruit more Mexicanos into the BGL organization while moderating their own racial extremists. These moves towards more positive programs and the inclusion of more Mexican-Americans in leadership positions began before the 1974 elections. They were even more apparent after the second straight BGL electoral victory.

Some of these pre-election moves to be conciliatory have already been noted. The new city manager and the city council began seeking federal funds to solve the drainage problem. The city also initiated a day care center for children of working mothers. Finally, the city council proposed creating several recreational and park areas. From the standpoint of political strategy, the most interesting dimension of these new proposals was the BGL effort to coordinate the Anglo-run city, school, and county agencies. Given the historic fragmentation of most small town government and school agencies, these moves were strong indications of an Anglo effort to be responsive to Mexicano demands. Past school board, city, and commissioners' court records revealed that much discussion and very little action ever occurred between these separate agencies. They were more likely to fight over how their respective lands, fire trucks, and personnel could not be used by the other agency. However, in the face of the La Raza threat, the county agreed to use revenue sharing monies for a city project to refurbish school recreational facilities.[5]

The BGL also responded to Ciudadanos demands for admitting more Mexicanos to leadership positions. A group of Ciudadanos leaders had demanded that the local bank president hire more Mexicanos. In the fall of 1973 several Mexicano tellers were hired, and a former city councilman of the early sixties, Mr. Aldana, was promoted to cashier. Further, the bank cashier, a department store manager, and a postman, one of two BGL Mexicanos on the city council, were invited to join the Rotary Club. Although such appointments were viewed by Raza supporters as mere appeasement, the BGL leaders felt that they were seriously responding to Mexicano demands. In their mind they were including "responsible Mexican-Americans" into leadership positions. As indicated, Anglo sponsorship of selected Mexican-Americans for both appointed and elected local government positions began during the fifties. Under pressure to change even faster, the BGL leaders continued selective sponsorship and appointment of Mexican-Americans to leadership positions. It should be noted, however, that the county, city and school administrative positions of North Town remained predominantly Anglo.

The BGL made an even more vigorous effort to recruit what they considered responsible Mexican-Americans into their organization. They were acutely aware that the BGL was largely an Anglo organization, in spite of the charter which emphasized its biracial character. Several Mexican-American businessmen and professionals who were considered "approachable" or "not hard-core La Raza" as one old-time Mexicano leader put it, "were courted shamelessly." He continued by illustrating what he considered Anglo courtship:

> What do I mean by courtship? If you stay over here on the west side I'll tell you what you'll see. You'll see Mrs. Hart on the school board running around going to Mexican funerals. You'll see the mayor and Mr. Weeks (a city councilman) with his red face and skinny moustache being at every opening of a Mexicano business they can. When Mr. Gracias opened up his store there they were smiling. When Mr. Torres remodeled his movie house, there they were. I heard the other day that they might even start inviting us to their houses to get us into their BGL. It seems like to me some of us are getting courted. Look at Mr. Casava who they talked into running for their school board. I never knew he liked gringos, but he is a good man, a trusting man, so I guess they talked

> sweet to him. The gringos can talk real good when they need you for something, but it comes from their head not their heart, mark my words."

Nearly all Raza Unida supporters staunchly contended that the Anglos also either "sweet talked" or forced many of their ranch laborers or store laborers to become BGL supporters. The BGL purportedly twisted many Mexicano arms by foreclosing on loans or threatening to fire people. A few Ciudadanos Mexicanos reported cases of "political firings," but several range hands and storeworkers suggested that reports of reprisals were probably somewhat exaggerated. Several prominent Ciudadanos businessmen and farmers with large loans at the bank did not suffer foreclosures. A certain pragmatic, business-like attitude tended to prevail that moderated excessive economic reprisal. Further, a kind of social reserve also prevailed that kept Anglo courtship from getting "too social." Several Mexicanos who were accepted as potential leaders privately admitted that they did not feel socially accepted by Anglos. They all shared a lingering sense of being isolated from both groups. It appeared, then, that some "courtship" was taking place. But the average Mexicano voter was neither wooed or whipped into place very seriously.[6]

Conciliatory School Board Policies

Perhaps the single best place to observe the conciliatory moves of the Anglo BGL was in the North Town public schools. Indeed, local Anglo teachers and the more traditional community members rated the school board and administration as "too soft" and "wishy-washy" towards *La Raza*. Two descriptions of the school situation eloquently summarize how most North Town educators felt about the changes occurring in the schools. A teacher comments:

> Discipline and respect in the schools has broken down. Mexican kids are not respectful the way they used to be; they are very defiant at times, and their parents will complain if the kids are at all disciplined. Teachers have to be very careful now, if they don't want problems. Most of this is caused by the political thing. The Mexican kids just get promoted to avoid trouble. The parents will get angry and these older kids will be left behind to terrorize the younger ones in their grades, especially the poor little white girls.

Closely related to this view is that of an administrator:

> What we got now is a real problem. Some kids just won't get any better. They lack home influence and are just not real achievers, successful people with drive and self-discipline. There is nothing we can do, really, we need these tracks, an easy system. The kids can't do the work that we got now. The agency wants it. The people want it. We just go along any way.

Most Anglo teachers saw themselves and the schools as confronted with a very profound, far-reaching dilemma. They perceived the new influx of large numbers of lower income, Spanish-speaking children as destroying the previous quality and order of their schools. Yet even more disturbing, teachers also sensed that they were lowering the standards of work and discipline to cope with this "new intrusion." Most Anglo teachers expressed a sense of frustration and futility. Ironically, they themselves seemed to be destroying not only their schools, but the underlying values of American society. Change under these conditions was indeed painful.

From 1972 through 1974 the board initiated a series of school policies in response to the *La Raza* threat which increasingly brought them under community criticism. In the fall of 1973 the board passed a more liberal hair and dress code, which was recommended by a student-faculty committee. The board, in accepting this new policy, made clear that there was now a written, legal basis for sending offending students home. The implication was that the board would and could act now without personal, racial feelings.

Similarly, in matters of discipline the board also moved to control growing disorder at the high school. This meant replacing the previous liberal principal with a recognized authority, a former football coach and junior high school principal with a reputation for firmness and fairness. The board also replaced the school counselor and instituted a new position of vice principal. This new administrative team was mandated to "get hold of things" and "straighten out discipline [and potential racial problems] at the high school."

According to teachers, the tone and style of the high school administration did indeed change. The counselor was requested to help any and all students get into some college of their choice. The general sentiment expressed by the principal and counselor was that there was "a place for anybody and everybody." They were very careful to project the idea that no one, regardless of race, creed, and school performance should be discouraged. The counselor studiously avoided discouraging Mexicanos from going to college. He frequently expressed concern about "_La Raza_ jumping down my throat with their gringos-are-racists stuff." Few students complained about discrimination in this area.

Student discipline problems were also to be handled in a "more objective, impartial manner." Disciplinary actions were generally left to the young, personable but "tough" new Anglo vice principal. He immediately established a card file on each student offender, which students referred to (with raised eyebrows) as "_the_ file." Each student who had ever been sent to the central office had a "record." All of his previous unexcused tardies, detention hall sentences, and referrals from teachers were listed. His previous offenses became the basis for a discussion about his present offenses. Any tongue-lashings, "licks," (paddlings) and suspensions were based on this record. In essence, the problem of prejudicial, personal bias was eliminated by the file of evidence. The new vice principal quickly and skillfully developed this approach, and a reputation for being "strict but fair." He aroused enough hatred to have his car window smashed after a basketball game, but few Mexicano students felt that he was racially prejudiced. They thought he was fair to them because the method and manner of his actions seemed fair. Although he frequently administered some severe tongue lashings, and even occasional paddlings, the file of evidence was hard to argue against.

Policies toward placement in classes and evaluation also projected the idea of fairness and objectivity. In this case, fairness was to be achieved by the technology of objective tests. The principal strongly defended the placement of more than fifty percent of the Mexicano student body in all Mexicano classes because their achievement test scores were extremely low. He also defended the previously mentioned policy of social promotion on egalitarian grounds, i.e., that everyone deserved a high school diploma and a chance. In order to create opportunity for "low achiever Mexicans", the objective standards were lowered. Books at the fourth and fifth grade reading level were used, and objective exams were simplified so even slow students could pass them.

Although many educators would object to such practices as "lowering standards," efforts were made to retain the form of a competitive, objective evaluation process. In practice, however, the objective evaluations were stretched to preserve them; teachers prepped students, practiced tests, and often gave re-tests. Nevertheless, teachers were careful to avoid giving the "low achievers" high enough grades to make the honor roll, so as not to cheapen the meaning of other students' achievement. With these nagging contradictions, then, the school strove to create an objective, non-racist procedure for judging the performance of an increasingly restless Mexicano student body. This is not to argue that the North Town schools were free of prejudices or that they were places that reflected Mexicano culture; the schools did, however, enact many conciliatory moves and policies of the BGL school board.[7]

School Board Decisions and BGL Factionalism

Of all the conciliatory school board policies two stand out because they brought out old antagonisms among Anglos and threatened BGL unity. The growing disunity among Anglos centered on two school board decisions: 1) the hiring of a new high school football coach, and 2) the suspension of two Anglo boys for drinking during a school event. Although such decisions seem to have little political significance, the BGL moderates in control of the school board ran afoul of their followers on these matters.

During the fall of 1973 the North Town football team was picked to win the district championship. It was supposed to be the best team since the fifties when North Town dominated other teams in the area. North Towners, like many other Texans, take their football very seriously. The local Boosters' Club was quite active, and the townspeople prided themselves in following the team during road games more faithfully than other towns. But the football team had fallen on relatively hard times since the early sixties, and football coaches came and went with great regularity. In 1971 the board made the unprecedented move to hire a local Mexicano, a former star of the successful era. It was a controversial move because numerous people considered his appointment a way of appeasing the growing Mexican political threat. During his first two years he led a previously losing team to successive 7-3 records.

With many key players returning, he was expected to roll over opponents in 1973. But as the season progressed, it became clear that the North Town team was not going to roll over anyone. They were able to win four of their first five games, but never by impressive margins. Then they were upset by a small nearby town in North County, and dissension surfaced on the team. The "sideline coaches," which included many prominent local citizens, began blaming the coaching staff. Interestingly, the dissension on the team was not between Mexicanos and Anglos but among Anglo players who were jealous of each other. The players disagreed on which Anglo boy should be quarterback, and some resented a star end, who was accused of getting all the publicity but not "putting out 100%" on "being a leader."

Dissension also surfaced on the coaching staff between the head coach, Mr. Torres, and one of the Anglo assistants, Mr. Rogers, also a former star during the better years. The Mexicano head coach was receiving considerable criticism while the Anglo assistant, who coached the undefeated freshman team, was constantly praised. Near the end of the season the two men nearly had a fight after practice. Subsequently, Mr. Torres was requested by the administration to apologize to his assistant. Coach Torres made a very dramatic, and to some, humiliating apology to Coach Rogers before the entire team in a show of unity.

After the season ended, there was considerable talk among the Boosters' Club about finding another coach, someone who was "tougher and would get more work out of the kids." The man most frequently mentioned was the successful assistant coach, Mr. Rogers. The Mexicano head coach felt that he should resign as athletic director and head coach. Even though he had a successful 7-3 record and finished second in the district, he had not produced champions, and he had taken a great deal of criticism from both Anglos and Mexicanos. At least one group of Anglos, twenty or thirty of the main football enthusiasts, many former players and close friends of Mr. Rogers, wanted a new head coach.

Coach Torres was also not acceptable to many local Mexicanos affiliated with the Ciudadanos and Raza Unida. His father was a prominent local businessman, who the Raza Unida labeled as a vendido. The party had asked him to allow a free benefit dance in his dance hall. He refused, saying that he would not do that for any political group and that everyone using his hall had to pay. The local Ciudadanos proceeded to boycott his dance hall, which, after a few months, failed. This incident was the most dramatic event they cited to move his disloyalty, but he was known as having many Anglo friends, including an Anglo business partner. He had also been a political organizer for several Anglo politicians in an earlier era. His general relationships with and deferential demeanor towards Anglos were offensive to the most activist Chicanos; nevertheless, many local Mexicanos still considered him and his son to be "good people."

Coach Torres was not active politically with the local BGL, but he did "make the mistake of going to the first BGL meeting." Further, his family and several close friends were directly or indirectly connected with key people in the BGL. The Ciudadanos group, particularly a Ciudadanos school board member who had a personal conflict with the coach, wanted to "dump this Mexican errand boy for the gringos."

The predominantly Anglo board replaced the Mexicano head coach for reasons which did not initially seem political or racial, but by the spring were. Nothing was ever publicly said against the coach as a Mexicano, but when the BGL-controlled school board selected an outsider over the Anglo assistant coach, some Anglos began publicly attacking the BGL board members. An angry committee to support the Anglo coach was formed, held several meetings, and formally protested the decision of the local board. They placed an ad of support in the local newspaper and sought a hearing with the board. Several of the leaders in the group felt the board was "playing politics with their football team." First, they felt that the board had hired a Mexican head coach to "quiet down the Mexicans." Second, they felt that the board was getting back at them for undermining "their Mexican coach" and for creating dissension through their criticisms of the head coach and praise of the freshman coach.

From their point of view the board was attempting to appease the Mexicans at the expense of the team. The board was also "letting their money go to their head," because they were putting down the working man Anglos "who were not la-de-da socialites." Those actively supporting the Anglo coach were generally working class Anglos. Some were ranch managers and farmers, several were employees in a nearby city, and one was an insurance salesman. Some were college graduates and businessmen, but most local residents did distinguish them from the "prominent citizens, the Nob Hill BGL leaders." Several of the prominent Anglos expressed frustrations with the entire issue and were incredulous that such a thing would threaten the BGL unity. A few BGL leaders considered football as a minor, overemphasized aspect of school, a view with which the supporters of Coach Rogers would have violently disagreed.

While this debate raged among local Anglos, the Raza Unida leaders followed it with great interest and amusement. Their two board members had informally supported Mr. Rogers, but they lost in the spring school board elections and were not participants in the vote on the replacement of the coach. Even though they considered the Anglo coach a "redneck," they admitted that he had given Mexicanos a chance to play on the freshman team. At least several Ciudadanos leaders felt that they should "talk it up" among their people to get support for the local Anglo. During the fall when the two coaches were in conflict, they talked openly against the Mexicano coach, "to get this vendido." As the issues shifted, they wanted Coach Torres replaced with Coach Rogers. Many Raza Unida members signed the petition for Coach Rogers to further split the BGL. They sensed the growing antagonisms among local Anglos; they had seen this same conflict played out on other school board and council issues. The Raza Unida leaders generally perceived the split as being between the "educated, rich Anglos" and the "good ole boys," or "uneducated farmers" (i.e., less cultured, more rural, less wealthy).

The other incident that preceded and also provoked to a lesser degree the same split among Anglos was the expulsion of two Anglo youths from high school. In the spring of 1974, just prior to the coach's resignation, two Anglo senior football players were caught drinking beer during a stock show competition. The assistant agricultural teacher reported the incident to the principal, who, following the school rules, suspended the boys for the rest of the semester. One of the boys' parents appealed to the board and a hearing followed. Both boys were the sons, or friends, of leaders in the Boosters' Club who were actively campaigning for Mr. Rogers.

During the hearing many Anglo parents came and spoke in behalf of the boys. They admitted their guilt, but testified that they were good boys who needed to graduate and go on to college. The most commonly used arguments were that "boys will be boys," and that the boys generally had good records and no harm had been done. These supporters generally took the position that under the circumstances, leniency was in order. The board ultimately took what many Anglo parents considered too harsh a position. It argued that if these boys were let off, it would make future discipline at extra-curricular events impossible. Leniency would set a tone that many other students would take advantage of; therefore, the board had to do the hard, unpleasant job of setting the example.

After the meeting, which was orderly considering the intense feelings, several Anglos criticized the board's decision and blamed it on politics. They argued that the board was merely making an example of the boys to appease the Mexicans. They cited a similar incident which occurred a year earlier when two Mexicans were expelled for drinking in the school parking lot. The disgruntled Anglo parents who supported the boys saw this decision as an attempt "to prove" that this board was "fair to the Mexicans." They considered the sentence unreasonable because even the past expulsion of students was not consistent. There were other students caught drinking during school events that were not expelled. Further, none of the previous cases were seniors with good records and ready to graduate and go on to college.

This incident was merely a continuation of the fall conflict over the coach and what some Anglos now perceived as a general policy of appeasement to La Raza. The same debate over tactics and approaches towards controversial public issues had been going on in the BGL and in the Anglo community for more than two years. These two incidents dramatically reflected the basic split between "hardline-rednecks" and "moderates" on how to conduct public relations with Mexicanos. The "moderate" position was also quite in tune with "teaching La Raza a lesson," but they were anxious to avoid open confrontations over relatively minor issues.

BGL - Raza Unida Perceptions of Factionalism

The key Mexicano leaders had rather vague ideas about the differences in attitudes among BGL Anglos; they were also unclear about who really held power and influence within the BGL. In their eyes the Anglos who saw themselves as moderates were considered the "worst rednecks." These Anglos were the visible leaders who had challenged them in city council, school board and public meetings. The only Anglos who were considered moderates were those businessmen who tended to stay neutral and out of public positions such as the popular Ford car dealer, a local druggist, and several farmers and contractors who "stayed out of politics and have always been pretty good to Mexicanos." To most of the Ciudadanos and Raza leaders, any

Anglo in BGL was a redneck, because the organization was dedicated to defeating them. Ciudadanos Mexicanos did make distinctions of BGL members who were "friendlier" or having "better personalities towards Mexicanos." However, they were generally not aware that Anglo moderates were having the same problems controlling their "radicals" as the Ciudadanos moderates were with their "radicals." By the spring of 1974 the Raza leaders had, however, recognized the Anglo split and sided with the "redneck" faction on the issue of hiring the coach. They sought to undermine further the BGL moderates control of the school board.

The Anglo views of Ciudadanos factionalism were no more informed than the Mexicano views of BGL factionalism. As indicated, BGL Anglos generally saw Father Reynaldo as the key leader, and for them, he became a devil figure who incited his people. He was the brains behind La Raza, and the Aztlán City movement was his pocketbook. Any Mexicano who was in Ciudadanos, which was merely a front for Raza Unida, was a "radical" who hated them. The BGL Anglos did not see the ideological differences among Ciudadanos as early as 1972. They also did not realize that their own responses and actions were an important part of the "political education" of many Ciudadanos members. The Anglos explained the growing hostility of the elected Mexicano leaders as "brainwashing" by outsiders, or as some form of inherited "reverse racism." One Ciudadanos member or "Chicano militant" was as bad as another. By the spring of 1974, the BGL leaders had also, however, recognized the Mexicano split.

The Anglo BGL leaders gradually revised their view of La Raza and began applauding the actions of the "rabid types like Ramírez and Salinas." Through information from Mexicans in the BGL, they came to realize that, "the extremists are our best ally." Some Raza leaders had publicly labeled other Mexicanos vendidos and cocos (brown on the outside and white on the inside) for not enthusiastically supporting the party. This offended many Mexicanos who did not consider themselves traitors to their race for not following certain local political leaders. The BGL began to exploit such conflicts by approaching Mexicanos who had experienced such criticism. For the spring elections they recruited two previously "neutral" Mexicanos to become school board candidates. The men, a gas station owner and a railroad employee, were generally against the "pressure tactics" of Raza Unida. They, like the BGL Mexicanos on the city council, resented the idea of a "party telling you how to run your life." Anglos who recruited these men emphasized the "hardline" quality of the Raza Unida leaders, much in the same way that Raza leaders emphasized the racist qualities of the BGL. To some extent, the BGL appeared to be more successful at exploiting such factional differences than the Raza Unida was.[8]

The Election Campaign of 1974

In many respects the elections of 1974 were a watershed in North Town ethnic politics and general Mexicano-Anglo relations. Both the BGL and Raza Unida were entering this second cycle of conflict faced with disunity. The leaders of each side were squabbling among themselves, and the rank-and-file showed signs of weariness with "ethnic politics." The BGL generally held their 1973 vote totals and following (900 plus votes for city council candidates and 1,100 plus for school board candidates). However, they apparently made few real inroads into recruiting large numbers of new Mexicano supporters. BGL leaders contended that they picked up approximately 200 Mexicano votes, but a Raza supporter who counted all the Spanish surnames who voted (city election) and then subtracted this total from the Raza total argued differently. He reasoned that no Anglos would vote for La Raza, which was undoubtedly true; therefore, those Spanish surnames left (74 in this case) were the Mexicans who went over to the BGL. His point was that the BGL had not been particularly successful in wooing Mexicanos to vote for them, but that Raza Unida had beaten itself. With the help of Anglo legal threats and activities, the party had made its own followers confused, fearful, and apathetic. Although perhaps not entirely accurate, these calculations and his theory did seem to represent the general trend of the election.[9] The Raza Unida suffered an even more crushing defeat than in 1973 since their vote totals dropped to 600 plus for council candidates and 900 plus for county candidates.

Neither side ran what might be called a well-organized, active campaign. The BGL held no public rallies and sponsored only one newspaper ad and a few radio spots. As in the previous year, they effectively organized a vigorous write-in campaign and canvassed their following by phone. In spite of growing Anglo disunity, the Anglo community rallied behind the BGL for a second year, if somewhat more reluctantly. The official information of Raza Unida, the appearance of Gutierrez and his lieutenants, several scathing Chicano Times articles, and the conflicts over school events kept Anglos in a fighting mood. The BGL leaders on the school board and in the city council went into this second campaign with growing confidence, despite some apprehensions. By election time it had become apparent that Raza Unida was increasingly disunited and dispirited. On the eve of the election several BGL leaders sensed that they would defeat La Raza even more soundly.

The Raza Unida ran a much more public campaign that included several rallies and a series of barriadas (block meetings). The candidates and particularly the county chairman Ramírez and councilman Salinas, actively canvassed their community. Among the most active campaign workers were a small group of women (eight or ten) who formed the core of the Women's Auxiliary of the old Ciudadanos. Some of these women were the wives of politically active men, but several were simply strong, independent-minded women who were politically-involved. Some joked about their husbands being vendidos, or dead, or "run off." No more than eighteen or twenty people, then, carried the fight to the BGL. The most noticeable aspect of the campaign was the number of different factions or types of La Raza supporters who were, as the real organizers put it, "sideline coaches."

The reasons for different types of supporters "sitting on the sidelines" were varied and complex. Before describing the feelings of old-time Mexicano leaders, businessmen, the 1972 "radical" leaders, students, and the moderates, one key event that irrevocably split the party must be recounted. In the early fall of 1973 it was apparent to Ciudadanos leaders that the growing "radical" faction and the "moderates" disagreed on whom to support in the race for North County judge. The county had been run since 1952 by Judge Ransom. The judge, a former drug store clerk who generally had the support of Mexicanos and rural Anglos, was periodically challenged by "prominent North Town Anglos." By 1973 the Judge had clearly become vulnerable to new political organizations among young, city-oriented Anglos and among the activists Ciudadanos Mexicanos. He was generally seen as a slow-moving, unprogressive, limited leader. Indeed, the entire "court-house gang," according to some, was due for a change. None of the long-time county job holders were active leaders in the BGL, and they definitely were not sympathetic to La Raza. There was, then, a general mood to have a new county judge, and eventually to change the exclusively rural direction of the commissioner's court.

In the fall two new Democratic candidates emerged. One was a local Anglo lawyer who ran unsuccessfully for the county attorney's position in 1966. Random sentiment about the Anglo candidate ranged from "he is a nice fellow but awfully dumb," to "he is an incompetent lawyer and an even worse candidate than Judge Ransom." He was generally considered a weak candidate and one who would draw just enough votes away from Judge Ransom to let the Mexican candidate win.

The other candiate was a prominent Mexicano restaurant owner in a small town, Dobieville, in the southern part of the county. Mr. Galván was in his early thirties, had a college degree, and was active in city council and school politics in Dobieville. He, several other young Mexicano professionals, and the old and new EODC directors, had successfully gained a majority on the city council. They also eventually (1975) took control of the school board. This group, which included a young North Town educator who became their school superintendent, firmly believed that any Mexicano takeover of North County was more easily accomplished through the Democratic party. They contended that taking over the existing county organization and working with progressive Anglos was the way to improve conditions in North County. The Dobieville group, which was well organized and free of factions, sought the support of the North Town Raza Ciudadanos group. Without them, it would be difficult to capture the county with the outlying, united Anglo vote against "La Raza."

In North Town several key members of the "moderate" faction were in favor of supporting Mr. Galván and not running any Raza Unida candidate which might split his vote. Particularly the Ciudadanos school board members sought to convince Salinas and Ramírez and others that Galván was not a vendido but was a strong, "Chicano-oriented" candidate. They argued that he would work for the same programs and changes that a Raza candidate would. Privately, the moderate North Town Ciudadanos leaders "talked up" the Galván candidacy, but they were not entirely sure that he really had learned his political lesson about gringos yet. They simultaneously saw him as a good man, intelligent and socially active, but politically very naive and overly optimistic about his own Anglo support. The moderates now distrusted the Democratic party strategy of coalitions with Anglos, having been "tricked" and bitterly defeated by the "gringo BGL." They favored some form of "Chicano politics" but they also felt that the quickest, most practical way of getting in the court house was through the attractive, if not entirely satisfactory, Galván.

Conversely, those Ciudadanos leaders bent on creating a strong Raza Unida Party saw Galván as a weak candidate, not unlike the "tokens" the BGL "vendidos" on the North Town city council. A formal barbeque to get the Dobieville group and North Town Raza Unida together behind Galván was organized. A good deal of private discussion among the North Town Raza factions ensued. The Raza leaders remained resolute, and Galván's advocates among the moderates gradually lost heart with his candidacy, and with the party and general election campaign.

Galván, himself, did not take his case to the Raza Unida leaders or actively campaign in the North Town barrios. Still believing that he could draw considerable progressive Anglo support, he studiously avoided being publicly seen with Raza leaders. This campaign strategy only reaffirmed the arguments of the Raza leaders, and to them, he proved himself a vendido and something of an "Anglo-lover." In the

Democratic primaries Galván received 939 to 1,231 for Judge Ransom and 527 for the Anglo lawyer. In the run-off Judge Ransom defeated him 1,529 to 1,138 votes. Without a cross-over vote of six to seven hundred North Town Raza votes, it was impossible for Galván to defeat Ransom. In the spring elections Ransom soundly defeated what even many Raza Unida supporters conceded was their weak candidate by 2,376 to 721 votes.

In retrospect, Galván realized that very few of the Anglos who claimed to support him actually did. Instead, the "progressive" Anglos ultimately supported Judge Ransom, a man for whom they generally had low regard, over a young, college-educate businessman who had a record of civic activity. The reasons for the lack of Anglo support of Galván were undoubtedly complex. The most apparent reasons mentioned during post-election gossip was that Galván sympathized with the Raza Unida or was at the least a "La Raza type Mexican."

It was a bitter political lesson for Galván, who privately admitted that he had misjudged the degree of racial feelings on both sides. He blamed the cocos in the BGL for turning the Anglos against him by exaggerating his actual connection with Raza Unida. But his faith in the progressiveness of Anglos was also seriously shaken, and his sense of a need for a more united, more "Chicano politics" was greater. Although one commissioner from the Dobieville Mexicano political group was elected, the opportunity to gain control of the North County court house was lost for at least four more years.[10]

As the North Town Raza Unida moved deeper into their spring campaign, the moderates became increasingly inactive. The small band of Raza Unida activists, in spite of obvious and increasing disunity, pushed forward with political rallies and _barriadas_. One major rally was held in a small park in the middle of Mexican Town. As in most Mexicano political rallies in South Texas, this one featured a series of speakers and a presentation of candidates. In the meantime, much socializing and the _comída_ (eating) took place. Children were running around playing; high schoolers were flirting with each other, and everyone was eating tacos, tamales, and pinto beans. Such events are invariably family events as much as a gathering of the political clan. The men stood in bunches smoking and talking politics, pick-ups, and baseball. The women were seated around in cars or on benches,or they were scurrying after infants. The principal speakers at the rally was Señora Muzquiz, a long-time leader of the Aztlán City Raza Unida, a speaker noted for her passionate, eloquent talks: (translated from Spanish)

> Good evening, it is also a pleasure for me to be, for the first time, in a rally as beautiful as this of the "Raza Unida," in a rally of a _partido_ that is beautiful because it is our _partido_. It is a party where we did not need one white to be formed. In many areas, in many communities of South Texas, we have proven, to many whites, that like them who were able to start their parties, Democratic and Republican, and have come until these times to be known like major parties, we have also seen our start, and forward we go, and we shall see each other there. Because our party has been called many names, the last one that it has been called in Aztlán County is that we are like a cancer. You know why? Because they are beginning to recognize that partido of Raza Unida has been born and that it does not care how many traps will be set, legal or illegal. _La Raza_ has risen;

we have risen; and when they make us believe that we do not have dignity of position, it is going to cost them a lot. Because we know in our blood, in our Mexican blood, in our Indian blood, we know our heroic heritage. For that reason, because we have faced that reality, we are not going to be pushed again. We are going to raise our people, and we are going to place that partido of the Raza Unida so high that the Democrats, as the years pass, will look small. For a simple reason, we were born Raza, first appearing weak because we have sustained ourselves on frijóles (beans). But we were born of a race that has learned to support hardships of our lives, in our body, ever since we were young ones. We know how to suffer the cold. We have suffered in the life of work, and our body has become strong and firm. But what we had not discovered was that we were also strong in our heart. But now we are beginning to discover this, because it was already in us. It was in our blood. But because of reasons that we were not able to explain, until now, since 1970 until the present, there have been groups of Mexicanos that have risen. We have come to recognize that, only when we get together, can we, like a family from the small ones to the older ones, we can have unity to fight for our privileges, and for our rights. This morning we participated, a group of us, in a march in Harmon. Do you know the purpose of that march? The purpose was that they have made demands to have equality in education, equality in personal treatment, because our Mexicano children are individuals, even though they are only children. They are human, and they also want to be treated in the schools with equality. Those people of Harmon have presented themselves before the school board, demanding their rights to be treated with equality, and their petition was placed aside. Their demands were not heard. They were just set aside, and that is why they began to express their opinion, and have started the march, and have started their walkout like what we have seen for the last decade in many communities. In some of this, our children, our young people, have lost their lives like it happened in Pharr, in other areas, in other states. They have died for a struggle; they have died for a cause like the one in California, in the struggle of the worker for better wages, for better treatment, and young ones have also died, and also other people. These people are asking for their rights. These people have risked their lives, and this price, brothers and sisters of la Raza Unida, we should consider it and notice. Not only from the paper but also from our heart. Because we have arrived at this level, because those souls have died for the struggle, we can see where they are, and can say, immortals, it was not in vain.

And you here in North Town, will have a struggle not only with the Anglo, but also with our own brothers, with the same ones of our Raza. It is a pity that money has a power that we will wish at times did not exist, because money will damage some persons. But one can see here, how with the humbleness of the candidates that have appeared here in front of you, that they with that honor of accepting the responsibility of running in the Partido de La Raza Unida, we do have another, better alternative. The Republicans and the Democrats have proven to us, in all our lives, that there is not a chance or hope in those parties. Because we, the Mexicanos, have gone out to the streets to support them, so that they will be in strong positions, with the hope that they would help us, but the situation has continued the same. Thus, begin the protest, the huelgas (strikes), all kinds, because there has not been hope for us. The inequalities continue in our homes, in our housing conditions. The inequalities continue in our schools. The inequalities continue in jobs. We have run for public positions in our attempt to do something for our barrios, for our people, and they placed traps before us. When we want to run for a high position, they call us communist. And there are many that do not want to see this; there are many that are totally blind. And they do not see that the Anglo, when we try to take a position, do not want this because they do not want us to rise to a level where there is dignity. They do not think that we have dignity and that we can also serve like they have served for years and years. They have always been the special ones, they have always been over us. In Aztlán City, many Anglos moved when the Raza Unida took the positions. It was not because they were afraid or because we scare them; they could not take that a Mexicano could be in position in the city, in position in the schools, and when they saw that they could not prevent this, then they gathered their belongings and left.

> That was what we expected of them, everyone in this group here will have to face that, and make within oneself that peace, that feeling that you are human, that you have dignity, and that you have that right to choose whatever candidate you want. Vote for your candidate, the candidates of the Raza Unida. Show that you have dignity and that this time you will have a choice. Show them that we are also human and have dignity, and that we can also direct the government. Thank you.

In a second Raza Unida rally the day before the elections Mr. Alonzo, one of the more outspoken moderates, emerged as a peacemaker to knit the factions together. He tried to bring the Raza together by convincing the Methodist and Baptist ministers and Father Reynaldo to be key speakers. Although this tactic came too late to have much of an effect on voters, it was a surprising show of unity and sympathy for *la causa Méxicana*. Prior to this rally neither of the Protestant ministers was active politically. If anything, the Methodist minister had been considered hostile to Raza Unida. The two ministers spoke primarily about human rights and working together to make this community a better place for Mexicanos. Their message was largely religious and stressed brotherly love and Christianity. Their presence was an implicit statement against widespread criticisms of Raza Unida as communistic and cruel and as a group based solely on racial hatred of Anglos. But the highlight of the evening was a speech by Father Reynaldo, his last openly "political talk" in North Town: (translated from Spanish)

> Senor Alonzo -- "I would like applause for the pride of the '*colonia Méxicana*,' he is the padre of our Catholic Church. Let us now have a beautiful applause for Padre Reynaldo."

Padre Reynaldo:

There exists a pride in being here, this night especially with my brothers the Rev. Miguel Romero and Elias Tovar. Let us give a grand applause for these persons.

Señor Alonzo was speaking and he tells us that he had some persons here, what were the words that he used? It was beautiful. And I turned to Rev. Romero and I told him, he is madeyeando (cunning). But let us now get more serious, we those that are in charge of the spiritual life of North Town. And not only us, there are still some more that are not here. Some problems occur day after day for our people. Talking to Rev. Romero and Brother Tovar, they also let me know that the problems do exist, that our people suffer. This suffering that we see causes great pain in us. We would like to do more if possible, but the three of us cannot do it. We need the cooperation of all of you, of your families, of your relatives. One could go and pray, but remember that you are the ones that form the church. The Rev. Romero could also do the same, and brother Tovar. All three of us could be in the church praying, asking God, but you, you are the ones that form the church. Without you, we could not be successful. That is why we are here this nite with you, asking you your cooperation, talking to you Sunday after Sunday, and also in the services that we have in the churches, about the love of God and the love for those next to us. This is what all of you have listened to when one speaks. But remember if you say that we love God and at the same time we do not love those al próximo (next to us), Saint John tells us in the scriptures that we are liars. If we really want to love God, we have to love our fellow men. And when our fellow man is in need, we have to help him out. We see some persons that have an interest in helping the rest of the people. We see persons that have come forth as candidates for positions in the city or in the "school board." And all of these persons have an interest in you. And now, you, are the ones that can help them out. You can help them out in one manner or another. So that you, yourself, your families, and the people, can place these persons in a position so that they can help those people that cannot help themselves. Just one more thing that I want to say, in the scriptures and one can say many things about the scriptures. It seems as though we have all the answers for our

> questions, but our Father, Jesus Christ, told us once, that a house divided within itself, would fall. There is no place in our lives, there is no place in our community for division. This community should be united, helping those persons that can help us and that are going to help us, and that are going to help people that are poor and humble, those that work day after day for their bread, for the bread of their family. That is why we are here tonight, asking you, with your help, influences, can help these persons that need your help, and not only for them, but so that they, once in a position, can help the rest of the people. That is why I ask you for your help, your influences, and your prayers. With this, I would now like to present you, my friend, the brother Romero. I would like a grand applause for him. (applause) If we, if we can get together in the churches, if we can be here together, we have different theologies, but we can still sit down and talk. We are good friends. That is the way we want to see the people, united. Amigo (friend) (referring to Rev. Romero), if you would like to say some words. What are your desires for our city, whatever you would like to tell us. It would be an honor to listen to you. Thank you.

Another popular way that Raza Unida tried to reach its voters was through neighborhood block meetings. Approximately thirty people attended one typical meeting, which took place outdoors at one of the candidates' house. To begin, the candidates distributed their cards, and one distributed his bumper stickers. It was an informal gathering that often became emotional with people spilling out their feelings and experiences and exhorting each other to fight the gringos. The precincts were discussed, and the county chairman of the party described how Anglos had reorganized the districts to split the Mexicano vote. Then a person told of a woman who went to vote wearing her Raza Unida button and was harassed: "The gringos told her she couldn't vote with the button on, that it was in the election book." After some discussion, the wife of a prominent merchant spoke at length about what she saw as the main problems in North Town: (translated from Spanish)

> Mexicanos paid city taxes and yet all the improvements were for the Anglo side of town. Mexicanos were burdened with having to pay very highly for any improvement on their side. Mexicanos did not have to be grateful to the Anglos for anything. Some people told me that the Anglos were nice to them and how could they go against the Anglos. I said: "I don't want a pat on the head. Where are the improvements to my community? A pat on the shoulder won't pave my street." People should not vote because they like or dislike the candidate but because of what the candidate can do for the community. We are not rebels, unlawful people; we are not communists and we are not trying to be disruptive, what we want is to fight for our rights. The struggle is one for justice, against all the injustices that the gringos had perpetrated against the Mexicanos. The priests, the bishop, and even the pope are for justice and are fighting for the same cause as theirs. We need to do this for our children's future and the community welfare. The children needed better education, but if candidates right now are not the better educated people, that doesn't mean they shouldn't be elected because what counts is their voluntad (good will) and what they want to do for the community. Wayne may have diplomas but he won't do anything for the Mexicano. There are Mexicanos who are in official positions who won't do anything for the Mexicanos either because they are running for another party and are under the gringos' orders. That is why the Mexicanos need a third party, to be completely independent from the gringos. Salinas for instance doesn't have to give account of what he does to any gringo because he doesn't run with them, so he can serve the community as a Mexicano. We are Chicanos and should be proud of it. There are in South Texas eighty-five Chicanos for fifteen gringos.

> Yet the school in North Town has 125 teachers but only ten are Mexicanos. Why is that? We need Mexicano teachers who will give classes in both languages, so that kids who only know Spanish won't get lost and will learn better.

As the meeting continued several other people described incidents at the schools, how Anglo teachers humiliate the children in front of their peers by cleaning their heads of lice. Another woman told how she was a certified teacher but was denied a job in the North Town schools because her husband was a Raza Unida leader. Others told horror stories about the schools and about denied opportunities. The meeting finally closed with some discussion of Councilman Salinas' trial in Austin and the victory that had been salvaged.

In retrospect, many of the Raza Unida leaders felt that the barriadas were generally not very effective, because they reached mainly those who were already committed. Others criticized the campaign efforts for not having enough big rallies. Others wanted more block workers to get out the vote. Outside of a few active women and the candidates themselves, no one else did the tedious, day-to-day, door-to-door or phone canvassing. Unlike the computerized block lists and the hordes of student and party workers in Aztlán City elections, the North Town leaders ran a very limited campaign.[11] Of all the problems they encountered, however, perhaps the most debilitating was the number of non-participating sympathizers.

Raza Supporters "Sitting on the Sidelines"

The largest group to withdraw from the movement was the moderates. In actual fact those moderates who were candidates and those who sought to be peacemakers did attend barriadas and rallies and were "active." But there were many others who stayed away from any involvement. Some, like the deposed mayoral candidate, were deeply in debt from the previous election. They stayed home to build up their businesses. Others like the cashier and an outspoken principal minimized any public activity because of their positions in the Anglo bank and the Anglo school system. Others were simply tired of the fighting among their own people, as well as against the Anglos. At this point a number of the moderates had become disgusted with the "dictatorial" and "hard-headed" approach of the new Raza Unida leaders. They felt that it was useless to talk to them about not calling people vendidos and pendejos, or about not formally becoming Raza Unida, a label which they felt confused and scared many Mexicanos.

Gradually, the moderates developed the strategy of strategic withdrawal, in effect, to destroy the Raza Unida party. They did not seek to destroy Chicano politics, only a Chicano politics led by Chicanos whom they felt were out of touch with the people. Rather than openly fighting the "radicals," they chose to "let them beat themselves" in future elections. The moderates generally felt that it may take several election defeats for the most stubborn radicals to understand that they did not have the people's support, but the moderates were willing to wait. They felt that there would come a time when, they, "a more reasonable, respected group in the community," could begin to reorganize under a new political banner, or perhaps under the Democratic banner.

By 1975 some moderates formed a social club, *El Sarápe*. The club seemed similar to earlier LULAC or Latin Center Clubs common in Mexicano communities. It included eight or ten of the more politically active moderates. Raza Unida leaders looked down upon the club as a bunch who "thought themselves better than the poor Mexicanos." BGL leaders were puzzled as to the nature of this group and expected them to try an open coup of the Raza Unida leaders. But the moderates stuck to the idea of withdrawing their support from Raza Unida. They had intimate knowledge of how open, warring factions had developed and torn the party apart in Aztlán City and were anxious to avoid this. Though they would make lasting enemies of the Raza Unida leaders for this withdrawal, they felt that it was the best way of avoiding a permanent split along family and friendship lines in the entire community. It was time to cool politics off for awhile, and only a withdrawal could do this.

Another type of Raza supporter that seemed to be on the sidelines was the "ex-radical." Several of the original activists of 1972, the ex-city manager, his brothers, the ex-councilwoman, and some young college students seemed to be exhausted by the struggle and disgusted with the lack of support they had received. They felt that they had worked very hard for the party and the people for nothing. Mrs. Tolivar, the former councilwoman, expressed her disillusionment in the following way:

> When we started the whole thing there were more people involved. About 1300 people voted for us.

> Then the gringos cut us down by taking people to court, things like that. Now people are basically afraid of going out to vote. Even the ones who are legal, who would have no problem of being penalized don't want to go, because they don't want any trouble for themselves. The gringos have the power, the money, everything. It is hard to go against them. Like the gringas who have Mexicanas as maids, tell them who to vote for. They even come here to pick their maids to go and vote and they give them the sample ballot. So the Mexicanas, of course, vote for gringos. It is very difficult to make people aware of political problems because of the gringo power over the financial lives of the Mexicanos. Besides, the Mexicanos here don't care too much about politics, about the community. "*Se nos da la fregada*" (they blamed us, gave us no credit) when we are working hard for them. Like when we were in the city council or school board, these people tell us that we aren't doing anything and start saying bad things about us. After a while, a lot of good people naturally don't want to work in politics any more if they are going to be hurt and abused by the community. It is discouraging.

The ex-city manager, who was often criticized for "selling out" by taking a job with the largest Mexicano vegetable farmer in the region, expressed similar feelings. He also added that they had made too many tactical errors.

> Raza Unida is too disorganized and not in control of themselves. The Anglos are shrewder about overreacting. They are controlling their rednecks pretty good and keeping their cool better. We blew it . . . the people don't care about politics. My boss doesn't care about politics. It is very hard to educate people to be interested in politics . . . But we are getting what we wanted anyway. The gringos have to respond. They have to do more, get in more programs, improve things. This thing has forced some changes in this town. Things are starting to get a little better because we started something . . . Raza won't last here . . . I don't know

> how things will turn out in the future. The Mexicanos aren't going anywhere, though.

Another type of supporter who seemed to head for the sidelines as defeat appeared eminent was the Mexicano businessman. Initially a number of the most prominent Mexicano businessmen openly supported Ciudadanos; but as "Chicano politics" became less popular and more disruptive in the community, some feared for their businesses. Several of the leaders in Ciudadanos and Raza had suffered serious business losses. They had neglected their businesses and had lost customers for political reasons. The community was still not sufficiently politicized and organized to carry out a successful economic boycott against non-Raza stores. Nor were they able to successfully support businesses that were openly pro-Raza. The survival instincts of most successful Mexicano merchants and farmers prompted them to tone down whatever political fervor they initially had. Only a few "hard core La Raza types," as one Anglo merchant put it, "tried to make their politics and business mix." That the monied Mexicanos ultimately did not actively support Raza Unida proved to be a serious problem for the financially weak party.

A final type of Mexicano supporter that was curiously supportive in spirit but inactive in body was the old-time political leader. One thing which became apparent about the nature of small-town, local politics, Mexicano or Anglo, was that leadership was very generational. When an older, earlier generation or era of leaders suffered defeat, there were no triumphant returns to the center stage to lead again. Losing a local election apparently discredits one thoroughly because local politics is a very personal thing. When a candidate who lives in close proximity to the voters is rejected, it is at least in part a personal rejection. Unlike national politics where voters really do not know the candidates, to lose among one's friends and neighbors is a greater loss of honor. Consequently, the old Mexicano political leaders such as Mr. Guerra, the fiery ex-city councilman of the sixties, were particularly bitter. They really were not able to actively join the new wave of leaders. A barrier of fallen reputation stood between the old and the new generation that neither could overcome. Mr. Guerra described his political career and views:

> I ran independently for the Mexicano people. I was the first elected Mexicano, the others were just put in there by the gringos. They tried to buy me off too. The mayor invited me to his home to talk . . . People ten years ago were *muy pinchones* (uncommitted, unsupportive), now that we are getting in power, they are beginning to come out, they know they will get it. It will take five more years. People have been overpowered, now we have lots of votes, and they'll feel the pain and we're gonna beat them. We have been under their feet quite a bit of time. I don't have anything against gringos, though, but lots here are very much prejudiced, they think we are underrated people, but the majority are beginning to understand to meet us between the goal lines . . . no I am not active anymore. I have too many skeletons in my closet. When things were hot they accused me of many things. They say I drank too much and had too many women. No, my day is past . . . I am still a Democrat. I think the Republicans created this Raza Unida to split the Democrats . . . No, they don't come here to get my advice. I am not involved anymore. I got put out to pasture early, but I am still a good man, you better believe that . . ."

And if the old leaders were on the sidelines because of missed opportunities, the young high school students were there because they were given few opportunities to participate. There were many different student groups, some were against Raza Unida, some were "neutral." Those students whose parents were active in the movement were particularly pro-Raza. These students were generally the ones who organized Mexicano students "to beat the gringos" in student elections. Some of these organizers were outstanding students, some were the batos locos (poor students, clowns, hipsters) who went along with Chicano power or any power that could challenge the boredom and seeming arbitrariness of school and school rules. One of the pro-Raza honor students attempted to organize the eighteen-year-old vote at the high school. He succeeded in registering eighteen of fifty-three students, of which only half voted. Another popular student leader, the niece of the former councilwoman, made a short speech at one of the Raza Unida rallies. Other than this, the students were uninvolved. The party leaders generally perceived the students as too young and immature to be an active part of the movement.

It was generally true that Mexicano students were not well informed about local politics, but many had strong feelings, and some high motivation to be involved. Generally, however, they never approached the level of involvement that youth in Aztlán City did during their school walkout of 1969.[12] Although the administration worried about a similar student walkout, there were no forceful student leaders, and the adults tended to shy away from including the youth in politics, or from "playing politics too much with the schools." This ethic, one frequently expressed in the youth work of Father Reynaldo, was perhaps the single most important reason that students were generally on the political sidelines.

A Final Outburst of Conflict

On election day both sides were primed to find any irregularities or "cheating." Particularly the Raza Unida, facing what seemed imminent defeat, were frustrated and ready to salvage some honor from another election defeat.[13] The party set up a table in front of the library to watch whoever came to vote. The precinct lists of registered voters were used to check who was not voting. Meanwhile, individual BGL leaders were also driving around, observing the flow of voters into the polling places and had set up a pollwatchers' table. Generally, the election went on smoothly and peacefully. However, later in the day two Raza leaders, Mr. Alonzo and Mr. Matamoros, vented their frustration towards the BGL. The first incident occurred at the Catholic church when Mr. Matamoros attempted to frighten an Anglo pollwatcher, the wife of Dr. Weldon, a prominent BGL leader.

Mrs. Weldon had the reputation of being the "chief spy" for the BGL. She regularly attended school board meetings, city council meetings, and district court proceedings and always took extensive written notes on her observations. As one of the Raza leaders said, "she was everywhere, always writing down everything." On the day of elections Mrs. Weldon, who was accompanied by her housekeeper, parked near the Catholic Church and was observing the polling place. Mr. Matamoros reportedly went up to her and asked, "What are you doing snooping around here? Who is that Mexican with you?" After being told she was her maid, Mr. Matamoros asked, "Don't you know how to clean house? I bet you don't even know how to cook." He then told her, "You better get the hell out of here if you know what is good for you." Since he appeared drunk and attempted to open the car door, Mrs. Weldon was reportedly terrified and left. Mr. Matamoros apparently did not intend to physically harm Mrs. Weldon, but he was offended that she had brought her spying activities to the doorsteps of his church in the heart of the Mexicano community.

Later in the day several other incidents occurred which involved Mr. Alonzo. He reportedly took a BGL pollwatcher's checklist away from her near the high school polling place on the Anglo side of town. A little later he allegedly tried to swerve in front of another Anglo lady who had been a pollwatcher, at the same time hurling insults at her for spying on the Mexicanos. Both men were charged in the local Justice of the Peace Court with disorderly conduct, abusive language, and intent to assault. This action led to a protest march on the court house and considerable private grumbling. Eventually the more serious criminal charges were dropped, and both men pleaded guilty to the disorderly conduct charges and paid $150 fines. In retrospect both admitted that they had "gotten hot" and "had gone a little too far," but believed that they had been provoked. They also admitted that "putting Mrs. Weldon in her place" may have been worth the fine.

A Summing Up

The disunity and decline of the Raza Unida, then, was a very complex phenomenon. As the struggle continued, many different types of people withdrew for different reasons. Others had been on the "sidelines" from the beginning. The splits between the leaders were personal and ideological, often simply breakdowns in communication. Ex-leaders spoke of being called "drunkards," "whores," "greedy," "sell-outs." Present leaders spoke of being called "dictators," "fanatics," and "racists." Some leaders called the people flojos, and pendejos. As the movement suffered defeat, the leaders and followers blamed each other as much as the hated "gringos." In the face of such intense personal conflict and criticism, a kind of exhaustion and disillusionment affected even the most ardent leaders and supporters. The same sort of feelings and reactions were also apparent in Anglo disunity, but they had staved off defeat and with that had avoided, at least momentarily, widespread disillusionment, hence serious disunity.

Organizationally and psychologically the BGL came out of the 1974 elections much stronger. Their strategy of punitive and conciliatory moves had been successful. Many Anglos expressed great relief following the elections. Some thought La Raza had been broken. Others said they would be back. The Anglos' discontent with the BGL school board continued to criticize them and even made overtures to Mr. Alonzo and Mr. Matamoros about joining forces to oust the BGL! Further, even in victory the BGL leaders were exhausted, tired of conflict and the heavy obligations of being political leaders. Their personal lives and businesses also suffered from neglect. Some BGL leaders talked about disbanding the organization and several new leaders replaced the most active leaders of the 1972 to 1974 period. But the BGL maintained itself as a political organization and continued to run candidates and won the 1975 and 1976 city and school elections with even greater ease. With the relative decline of the La Raza threat, the BGL was able to become increasingly conciliatory and institute more new programs.

The Raza leaders were bitterly disappointed and angry. They felt betrayed by the moderates and their own people. They continued, however, to struggle, contesting election irregularities and running candidates. They were successful in drawing national attention (CBS news reports) to an incident in which Mr. Ramírez was beaten up by the local police. But the Raza Unida remained divided and continued to lose its following and the local elections. Meanwhile, the moderates, also discouraged by the election losses and splits among Mexicanos, remained in the wings. The Raza Unida claimed they "sold out the cause." The moderates claimed they were "waiting for their chance." North Town politics in general settled down. For some a new era of harmony has emerged from these confrontations, and as one ex-Ciudadanos leader put it, "was oiling the Raza to sleep."

He was referring to the rapid development of an oil drilling boom from 1975 on. Oil had come to North Town and distracted the new Mexicano políticos from fresh attempts to control their community.

A Final Note on North Town

Ethnic Relations

The Nature of North Town Ethnic Relations by 1976

In spite of all the political confrontations, it would be an exaggeration to characterize the daily life of North Town as rife with open conflict and hostility. Although there was much organized competition between Anglos and Mexicanos for control of local government and schooling agencies, local life was generally peaceful. There were no open fights or extreme forms of aggression and violence. Sentiment ran high among both Anglos and Mexicanos, but most people were able to control their feelings and avoid open confrontations. A great deal of people's aggression towards each other seemed to be channeled into private "bitch" sessions. We had occasion to participate in numerous private discussions over coffee or beer in public places and private residences. The conversation would invariably drift to heated discussion of the latest atrocity committed by the opposing group.

People also worked out their aggressions towards each other by isolating themselves from the other group. Anglos almost entirely stopped going to the Mexican celebrations of Diéz y Séis and Cinco de Mayo. Only the bravest Anglo would also venture into the Mexican cantinas, and each group had their own restaurants, bars, and public meeting places. A high degree of social segregation has always existed in North Town, but the recent conflict has clearly driven those Mexicanos and Anglos seeking to change ethnic relations further apart. A number of Anglos and Mexicanos who identified themselves as moderates or liberals lamented the fact that they had lost a number of friends from the other group since the political trouble started. Several couples with mixed marriages complained that they had become virtually isolated and had lost friends on both sides. Ultimately, they had to limit relations and become publicly identified with one group socially and politically. Generally, however, such couples and people on both sides who sought to be "in the middle" were forced to avoid all social relationships. Perhaps the majority of people in town sought to maintain polite public relations with any and all people from the opposite ethnic group.

Such patterns of public avoidance of conflict were very evident in the sometimes elaborate efforts of local businessmen, educators, civic leaders and churchmen to "be friendly." It is, of course, traditional in most small American towns to be "neighborly" and "friendly" in public, but many local Mexicanos noted that Anglos had clearly changed their public behavior. Some Raza Unida leaders interpreted this as "phony" as crude attempts to influence gullible Mexicanos into voting for them. Other Mexicanos felt that Anglos were sincerely trying to change, and their evidence of this was the better treatment of all Mexicanos in public places.

Others reported a continuing pattern of preferential treatment of Anglos in the waiting rooms of doctors' offices and in grocery store lines. Anglos were still served first. Poor Mexicans were still publicly embarrassed for using food stamps or for cashing welfare checks. Prominent Mexicans still felt socially excluded from Anglo "high society."

As indicated in the earlier discussion of changing economic and political conditions during the 1940 to 1960 era, North Town had already undergone some very profound changes in local relations between Anglos and Mexicanos. For the old-timers in the community the modern-day Mexicanos had come a long way. Both old Anglos and Mexicanos marveled at the way Mexicanos as a group had risen from peonage to higher levels of education and prosperity. They also taught their young that earlier forms of brutality, open killings, deportation and physical whippings, were largely a thing of the past. Many older Mexicanos, however, also cautioned their youth to be constantly vigilant of Anglos, lest they return to their old ways. There was considerable agreement among local Mexicanos which Anglos were "rednecks" who hated them, and which Anglos were trying to be fairer and more friendly.

Among the Mexicanos one could also find a good deal of bitterness and hatred for all Anglos. The vivid testimonials reported in earlier chapters represented what many North Town Mexicanos still carry in their hearts and minds. There are, of course, many other Mexican-Americans who have made peace with the past, and even present forms of discrimination, and who seek to live without hating Anglos. Some are indeed examples of what the Raza Unida called "colonized Mexicans"; they were still overly fearful and deferential to Anglos as patrones and superior people. They still believed more in whiteness than in their own brownness. Other "quiet Mexicanos" or "neutrals" were simply people who wanted to live peacefully without fear and strife. They wanted to stay out of politics and raise their family in the quiet of their home. To them much of this political struggle and the labeling of people as gringos, vendidos, and Chicanos were a form of madness.

They believed more in the simple pleasures of life and were perhaps indifferent to the ideal of "standing up for their raza." Despite all these differences, however, it is safe to say that the post-war changes have brought to North Town Mexicanos a new posture and perspective. North Town Mexicanos, whether militantly Chicano, colonized, or indifferent will never be the same. The west side of town, and particularly the youth, generally share a new sensibility and ethnic pride that will prompt them to fight for their individual rights. Anglo racism will be met with "Chicano pride," and increasingly Chicanos will demand full economic, political, and racial equality.

Local Anglos were extremely sensitive to any and all charges that they might be "racists" or discriminating against Mexicanos. Some were bitter about the way outsiders from government agencies and newspapers came and stereotyped them. We were included in this category, and some local Anglos refused to talk with us for fear of being misquoted and misunderstood. Other Anglo leaders were convinced that we had already written our conclusions, which included picturing them as hateful racists and the local Chicanos as the heroic, downtrodden masses. The local Anglo leaders felt completely misunderstood and in a sense "sold out" by their country. One prominent local farmer put it quite succinctly:

> Our family came here and made something out of this land and here I am, the fourth generation, and I'm still here fighting it out to make a living. I feel like a dying breed, I really do. It seems like the whole thing is going wrong. People up in Washington don't understand, neither do the politicians in Texas. Nobody seems to care if these La Raza types come in here and destroy everything a lot of good folks

> have worked pretty hard to build up. I can't figure it out anymore. I thought I was being a good American and now we got all these damn bureaucrats from everywhere comin' in here and telling us to give the Mexicans this and that. They act as if we are killing them in the streets or something. I tell you this, there are good Mexicans and bad ones. It makes me sick to see so many on those food stamps and welfare, but I know some of them are fine people. I don't give a damn about politics and I am sick as hell of being called a gringo when I don't even know what I have done.

There is in this testimonial, and many others collected, a great paradox for most Anglos. To them they have been model citizens doing what they were brought up to do. They saw themselves as hard working, honest, fair-minded people who make America the great country that it is. They hold many of the traditional values of rugged individualism that, to them, epitomize American society. But things have changed, and they sense being out-of-step with the times. They feel that their life-long attempts to live up to the ideals of American society are now misunderstood by many other Anglos who they label "outsiders," "liberals," "bureaucrats," and "bleeding hearts."

Yet, the old rationales as being the chosen people, those destined to lead and develop this land were hardly believable. Anglos had come to see Mexicanos run successful businesses, make important school and city council decisions, be on the honor roll in school, and generally achieve all the forms of success that only a supposedly superior people could obtain. Clearly, at least some Mexicanos were as talented or more talented, hard working and successful than Anglos, and it has become increasingly hard to use the arguments of Anglo genetic or cultural superiority. Many Anglos privately admitted that much mistreatment and inequality had marked Anglo-Mexicano relations. For some this sense of guilt was difficult to live with.

A few of the more liberal Anglos in the leadership group and a few teachers were increasingly more accepting of the Mexicano people in general, but little direct socializing or genuine exchanges and friendship seemed to exist. Anglos did not shop and socialize in the Mexicano side of town, and they generally knew very little about the personal lives of the Mexicano. The stereotypes of the lazy, drunken, dirty, sexual promiscuous and mentally slow Mexican were still common. A distinction was made between the "better class" Mexican and the average Mexican, but many Anglos expressed resentment for the Mexicano. Many saw the average Mexicano as on welfare and as sponging off their taxes and using various "tricks" to get free money. They feared that the large number of Mexicanos in the schools was bringing down the quality of education for their children, which affected their own chances of competing in the larger world.

In short, the Mexicanos were often blamed for the high levels of unemployment and the stagnated economy. The new group of Anglo leaders have inherited the third and fourth generations of the original sharecropper and cheap migrant labor. At one point in history they needed these people. Today, however, the Anglos do not have the wherewithal to create a new economy that will employ and absorb this fast-growing Mexicano labor force. Most Anglos subscribe to a theory that somehow the present "problem" they have inherited is the fault of the local Mexicano. Many would prefer to assign the blame to the character and cultural inferiority of the Mexicanos. Anglos feel that economic opportunities are there, if the local Mexicanos would discipline themselves and work as the Anglos have. Those Mexicanos that remain poor and ignorant are simply reflections of their inherent inferiority. Many Anglos still had a rather ingenuous narrow view of the Mexicano people, a view that overlooks the historical roots of the present situation.

Perhaps the most perplexing question one can ask about this case is, "Has anything really changed?" After all the public expressions of hatred and all the conflict, is North Town the better for it? This was a question that most local residents struggled with almost daily as they tried to make sense out of the events from 1972 to 1974. Every North Towner, depending upon his life experiences and sense of history, had a personal answer to this question. One could find every manner of optimism and pessimism expressed. We would add only one point to the reflections of North Towners, that is, one can only judge if social change has taken place with ideals such as justice, equality, and freedom. It is easy to point to changes in given leadership positions, or new buildings, or higher average incomes and claim that change has taken place. Such concrete changes can not be minimized or belittled. Yet in the final analysis, the only real indicator of change in human societies is some sort of qualitative difference. Has the quality of life and relationships among people changed towards a more ideal way of life? If so, how much? And how much further must we press to reach a greater measure of perfection for today and tomorrow? That a great deal had changed while things remained the same was a thought shared by a number of Mexicanos. Privilege and power in North Town were still as clear as the physical difference between "Mexican Town" and "Nob Hill."

Yet, no outsider could live in North Town without being struck by the numerous attempts to redefine everyday ethnic relations. Particularly the youth of North Town were struggling to redefine how to relate to each other. There were a dozen cases of secret Anglo-Mexicano dating. One clique of interracial students studied the Bible together, while another group smoked marijuana and got drunk together. Many students expressed disgust with the quarrels of their parents, with all this "stupid politics." They could not "wait to get out of this town." Many others spoke and acted exactly like their warring parents about "Meskins" and "gavachos." The Anglo youth generally feared and hated La Raza, and the more politically-oriented Mexicano youth hated the BGL. Socially, Anglos went their way and Mexicanos went theirs. But in general the youth of North Town were forced to cooperate and "get along."

In some of the youth there was a good deal more doubt and uncertainty about the negative views they held of each other. As in the case of the adults, each group could identify who were the rednecks and brownnecks and who were the "O.K., live-and-let-live ones." Although organized attempts by the Methodist minister failed to bring church youth groups together, and sports and band activities did not magically wipe out racial feelings, there were changes. Under the circumstances, each group avoided conflict remarkably well. To a degree, it could be said that there was a growing amount of mutual respect. One particular irony that many people noted was the marriage of the son of a prominent BGL leader and the daughter of a prominent Raza Unida leader. To some, this seemed to be some kind of poetic statement from the youth to the adults.

And what will happen in the near future of North Town? Will the Mexicanos press forward and eventually take over the community? Will they force the Anglos to leave as the Aztlán City Raza Unida did? Or will some form of coalition Democratic politics develop? Political soothsaying is a risky business, but one fact has seemed clear to both sides by 1974. If the Mexicanos were able to reorganize, it would have been entirely possible for them to take over. They had the numbers. Whether they had the motivation and the organization was another matter. North Town Anglos had won because the North Town Mexicanos had beaten themselves, with, of course, some help from the BGL strategists. North Town Anglos had also begun to show that they could change and adapt. Whether they could sufficiently bury past prejudices and continue to work for the progressive programs and changes that Raza Unida sought remains to be seen. And if the Raza Unida can successfully reorganize and win, will they handle power over other people any more justly than Anglos have? Or if the Ciudadanos moderates wait out the radicals and regroup, will they compromise their ideals to such an extent as to be indistinguishable from other traditional politicians?

Having lived through two years of this struggle, we had the sense that any coalition and peace would be tentative and tenuous. If North Towners believed the feelings they often expressed, the residue of racial hatred and mistrust will not disappear easily. New leaders with old embitterments may well rise again to avenge the past. How much future North Town leaders will remember and forget will probably be the key factor in what is to become of ethnic relations in North Town.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 1

1. Scott, Florence J. *Historical Heritage of the Lower Rio Grande.* Rio Grande City, Texas: La Retama Press, 1965.

2. Scott, Florence J., *Ibid*.

3. Newcomb, William W. *The Indians of Texas*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1961.

4. Holdsworth, Ernest. *A History of Aztlán County, 1865-1900*. Aztlán City, Texas: unpublished manuscript, 1969.

5. Castro, Stanley. *The Newman Strip: A Partial History of South County* . Hillsborough, Texas: Hill Junior College Press, 1969.

6. *Historic North County, 1871-1971*. North Town, Texas: The Centenial Commission, 1971.

7. Acuña, Rodolfo. *Occupied America*. San Francisco, California: Canfield Press, 1972.

8. *Historic North County, 1871-1971*. *Ibid* .

9. Holdsworth, Ernest. *Ibid*.

10. Schlebeker, John. *Cattle Raising on the Plains, 1900-1961*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1963 .

11. Osgood, Ernest. *The Day of the Cattlemen*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1929.

12. Scherer, James A. *Cotton as a World Power*. New York: Frederick States Company, 1916.

13. See Appendix A, Table 1.1 *General Population Trends in North County, 1910-1970*; and Table 1.2 *Farms in North County Classified by tenure, 1900 to 1969* .

14. Gamio, Manuel. *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant*. New York: Dover Publications (reprint), 1971; and John Martínez . *Mexican Emigration to the United States, 1910-1930*. doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, California, 1957.

15. This analysis is based on various comments made by all of the different types of agricultural laborers and growers interviewed. The particular numbers of workers, women ranchers and farmers is reported at other points in the discussion

16. Martínez, John. *Ibid*.

17. See Appendix A, Table 1.1 *Ibid*.

18. See Appendix A, Table 1.3 *Crop and Livestock Data for North County, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1935, 1945, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969*.

Chapter 1

19. No particular studies verify this trend. This interpretation is based on the recollections of old-timers, who judged these land schemes very successful in drawing people to their area.

20. This analysis is based on six contributors from two major settlements. The informants were able to list and agree upon 150 namges and only twenty were still in these communities by 1915. The local land records were also consulted for these settlements, and the tax rolls show major shifts, but no statistical table was constructed to show this pattern.

21. See Appendix A, Table 1.3, *Ibid*.

22. Schlebeker, John, *Ibid*.

23. We also found one original settler who had kept some of the early land advertisements and his contract on the land. One contributor also had an aerial map of the entire ranch subdivision. These items, plus numerous testimonials helped develop a better description of the land booms.

24. Tiller, James. *The Texas Winter Garden: Commercial Cool Season Vegetable Production*. Austin, Texas: Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas monograph # 33, 1971.

25. Tiller, James. *Ibid*.

26. Fifteen male sharecroppers and fifteen wives of sharecroppers were interviewed concerning the tenancy system. Twenty-five ranchers and farmers and various community leaders in business and the professions also made comments about the agricultural system of the North County region.

27. Contributors generally agreed that no more than fifteen to twenty per cent of the Mexicanos in the settlements advanced to *quartero* status. If was very difficult to verify from Anglo landowners if they favored *medio* tenants as Mexicanos claimed. Several also offered reasons why tenants on the *quartero* system were better, e.g., less management problems, more dependable, less cheating.

28. See Appendix A, Table 1.3 *Ibid*.

29. Acuña, Rodolfo, *Ibid*.

30. Acuña, Rodolfo. *Ibid*.

31. The North Town council minutes from 1907-1924 and from 1938-1974 were used to develop a general understanding of the main issues and leaders. Unfortunately, no minutes existed for the heyday of Mr. Cameron's rule. His former city clerk indicated that he avoided keeping records and claimed that he actually destroyed some as well. After becoming familiar with the issues and key leaders, a series of interviews with old-time leaders and observers of local politics was conducted.

Chapter 1

32. This analysis of "political machines" is based on extensive discussions with former political leaders and political intermediaries. The local newspapers were not useful on these informal dimensions of power and political process. The election results, with the names of formal leaders, hint of conflicts and factions. The family history and occupations of those names that stood out for long service were collected. Opposition leaders and ex-clerks or retired officials were the most informative contributors. The Mexicano intermediaries for Anglo politicians were also particularly open about these relationships. Once non-leaders had revealed "the inside story" about the leaders, it was possible to cross-check this information with the leaders or surviving relatives of leaders. Gradually a fuller, perhaps more accurate chronology of events, leaders and factions emerged.

33. This estimate of how little the taxes of the largest absentee landlord-oilman went up was difficult to make. The tax rolls were checked at three five-year intervals after the discovery of oil. The relative increase in the taxes of this oilman were roughly compared to the relative increases in taxes of several other known large ranchers. It was reasonably clear the oilman's taxes did not dramatically increase, but a precise figure was not established since that would have required considerable work with land deeds and tax records to cover the 100,000 acre ranch. As indicated, this is a very rough estimate from scanning the records.

34. The extensive, sometimes sterile debates in the community and power structure literature was not altogether useful in this analysis. The concepts of pluralism and of elite conspiracy are often used in such a normative sense that they misrepresent local views and political behavior in small towns. Further, both the "reputational" and the "event analysis" methodologies are seriously flawed. At least in this small setting, one does not need to, and should not, administer formal peer-ranking questionnaires to locate power holders. Nor does an analysis of even all the local political decision-making events or public rituals encompass the important power articulations or the system of power relations. This study generally used a very unstructured reputational approach with selected informants, but it also sought to locate local political behavior in historical events, historical trends and the general production and social relationships. The idea was to study "power relationships" as an aspect of other systemic relationships, not as expressly "political" behaviors or events. In this regard the notion of a "political economy" or "a culture of a political economy" provided a broader concept for thinking about asymmetry and subordination in human relationships.

Chapter 2

1. The discussion of the early schools is based largely on the recollections of many Mexicano students and several Anglo administrators and teachers. The county school records in this case were very incomplete and almost useless.

2. This study concentrated little effort on the schooling problems of black Americans. How these small rural towns of South Texas dealt with their small black school populations needs to be documented, too.

3. See Appendix A, Table 2.1 *Median Income and Median Education With Poverty Between Ethnic Groups in Three South Texas Counties*.

4. Lipset, Seymour M. *The First New Nation*. New York: Anchor, 1963.

5. Stein, Maurice. *The Eclipse of Community*. New York: Harper Torchbacks, 1964.

6. Myrdal, Gunnar. *An American Dilemma*. New York: Harper and Row, 1944; and Robert Blauner. *Racial Oppression in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1972.

7. Paredes, Américo. *With Pistol in His Hand*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1971.

8. Suttles, Gerald. *The Social Construction of Communities*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972. For the most well developed treatment of the concept of a "defended community" see this and other works by Suttles.

9. Limón, Jose. "El Primer Congresso Mexicanista de 1911: A Precursor to Contemporary Chicanismo" in Aztlan, Vol. 5, #1 and #2 , 1974.

10. Zamora, Emilio. Unpublished papers on the Mexican Labor Movement, 1900-1913. Austin, Texas, 1974.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter 3

1. U. S Soil Conservation Survey for Aztlán and North County. United States Department of Labor, Washington D.C.; Government Printing Office, 1929

2. Hammond, M.B. The Cotton Industry; and James Scherer. Cotton as a World Power. New York: Frederick Stokes C., 1916.

3. This historical reconstruction of the agricultural change process was based on a series of interviews with local producers. Thirty ranchers and farmers from different regions of the two counties were interviewed extensively. Their interpretation of general trends and their life histories as producers and community leaders were collected.

4. Tiller, James. The Texas Winter Garden: Commercial Cool-Season Vegetable Production. Austin, Texas: Bureau of Business Research, University of Texas monograph #33, 1971.

5. See Appendix A, Table 1.3 Crop and Livestock Production for North, County, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1935, 1945, 1954, 1964, 1969. The analysis of the decrease in spinach farmers is based on the water district records and the reports of three of the remaining six major growers. The numbers are estimates, but the general trend is very clear.

6. This reconstruction of changing land patterns was based on a smaple of six settlements scattered throughout the two counties. Two old-timers in each settlement listed the landowners and operators in their settlements in 1920 and as of today. These original settlers and landowners were able to list quite specifically the families who made up their communities, how much land they worked, when they sold it, to whom, and where they went. The cross-check between two residents invariably turned up only minor discrepancies in their recollections. In general, a fairly accurate picture of the changing land patterns can be obtained without time-consuming work with land deeds. These recollections greatly filled out the census data on land ownership and tenancy rates in Table 1.2 Farms in North County Classified by Tenure 1900, 1910, 1920, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969. (see Appendix A).

7. See Appendix A, Table 1.3, Ibid.

8. See Appendix A, Table 3.1 Rural-Urban Migration Rates in North County, 1930-1970.

9. See Appendix A, Table 3.2 Acreage of Irrigated Farms in North County, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969.

10. See Appendix A, Table 1.1 General Population Trends in North County, 1910-1970.

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11. See Appendix A, Table 3.3 Fertility in North County by Ethnic Group 1970.

12. See Appendix A, Table 3.4 Live Birth and Deaths in North County by Ethnic Group.

13. See Appendix A, Table 3.5 Spanish-Surname Population of North County by Nativity and Parentage*

14. See Appendix A, Table 3.6 Out-Migration Rates and College Attendance of Mexicano and Anglo High School Graduates in Two South Texas Towns. The pattern of return and its relationship to local community wealth and status was estimated by collecting the father's occupation of the high school graduates.

15. The financial condition of local Anglo producers was determined from the informal reports of two local bank officials. We never examined the actual loan records.

16. See Appendix A, Table 1.2, Ibid.

17. North County Report on Peanut Production. U.S. Department of Agricultural Extension, North Town, 1974.

18. Tiller, James, Ibid.

19. Tiller, James, Ibid.

20. Tiller, James, Ibid.

21. This interpretation of the federal government's role in local labor protection is based on the perceptions of twelve labor contractors. They agreed that the federal government eventually "meddled" in local labor conditions forcing them to provide better working conditions. Gradually braceros were perceived as"too expensive" for the type work they did. Reportedly, no bracers were allowed to cut spinach. They were used primarily as fill-in labor in the crews and for special, lower-paying field labor such as staking and stringing beans. The best type of field work was given to the more permanent local Mexicano workers, some of whom had worked for many years with their patrones. It was difficult to estimate to what degree braceros actually pushed out or replaced locals during the winter labor season. It was clear that braceros were very extensively used to pick and snap cotton in the West Texas migrant stream, and many new crews and crew leaders, predominantly from the border towns developed in the 1940's. It would appear, however, that braceros did not disturb the set of local grower-crew labor relations which developed in the mid-thirties and forties for assuring southwestern growers dependable winter labor. Further analysis is necessary, however, to determine how local growers adapted to this federal policy, the northern migrations and gradual mechanizations. The actual role of braceros in well-established local political economies, from a local perspective of labor systems, is yet to be done.

22. See Appendix A, Table 1.2 and Table 1.3 Ibid.

Chapter 3

23. The reported estimates of changing labor needs were not pursued in great detail. Clearly, much less labor was needed in all types of production systems, but to establish a more precise technical description of these labor systems would require better descriptions of the trends in mechanization and irrigation.

24. Taylor, Paul. *Mexican Labor in the United States*. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, reprinted, 1970.

25. Taylor, Paul. *Ibid*; and John Martínez. *Mexican Emigration to the United States, 1910-1930*. doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, California, 1957.

26. More recent trends of migrant labor were also obtained from the Texas Employment Commission. Very little accurate demographic information exists. The term "free wheeler" used in the text was commonly used by the officials who label the migrant workers. Local contractors and workers did not use this term, however.

27. Migrants interviewed discussed the socializing effect of the migration in very vivid terms. Most strongly believed that "going North" had a significant effect on their lives. Many also compared it to exteriences that they had in the service. Teachers also occasionally reported that migrant children spoke better English and were more mature. More studies on the psychological effect of migrating would seem to be in order.

28. Rivera, Thomas. *And the Earth Did Part*. Berkeley, California: Quinto Sol Publishers, 1971.

29. This is based on an analysis of the yearly city, county and school board minutes. All the monthly minutes were read and the occupations of all the candidates were then established. In the cases of key political figures, they were interviewed. Or more extensive biographical data was collected on them from surviving relatives, political opponents, and present-day officials. What earlier North Town politics was like was reconstructed through oral history interviews and these records.

30. The North Town city council minutes from the 1950's on clearly show this trend if one counts Spanish sur-names.

31. This pattern of policy issues and actions can be gleaned from a careful reading of the minutes.

32. Reconstruction of the early LULAC organization was done primarily with oral history interviews of the leaders in each faction. Some effort was also made to collect how the Anglo leaders of that period also perceived this new Mexicano political activity.

Chapter 3

33. The difference between "Main Drive Anglos" and "Hilltoppers" was very difficult to precisely define. It refers to both a basic economic and a status or lifestyle difference between"prominent" and "not-quite-so prominent" Anglos. Each "group" tends to live in certain parts of town, go to different churches, dress somewhat similar and socialize with each other. There are, however, many exceptions and these are not very precise groups. Local people do, however, perceive and talk about these "types" of people and at different points in local history some representatives of these "groups" battled each other for local leadership positions. During times of conflict North Town Anglos will describe these groups as the "rich Anglos" and the "working man-type Anglo." No matter how imprecise the"groups," they have political and social significance to North Towners.

34. The terms "moderates" and "radicals" were used by North Town Mexicanos. This distinction tends to indicate the degree that Mexicanos are willing to confront, and possibly offend, local Anglos and traditional superior-subordinate patterns of ethnic relations. The terms are more related to the etiquette of power relations than to more universalistic, ideological positions.

35. Identifying who the Mexicano political intermediaries were cam primarily from Anglo political leaders. In discussing their political careers, several Anglos described their "Mexican connection" without being asked. Such relationships were so basic to the political life of small South Texas towns that no one perceives this as a "bad" or manipulative thing.

Chapter 4

1. Aztlán City Urban Renewal Agency Report. Unpublished study, 1972.

2. This material is based on an unpublished local history of the Methodist church and on the North Town Centennial report, _Historic North County, 1877-1971_.

3. North Town Centennial Report, _Ibid_.

4. United States Commission on Civil Rights Report. _Mexican-American Education Study_. Volumes I through V. Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing, 1970-1974; Thomas Carter, _Mexican-Americans in Schools: A History of Educational Neglect_. New York: College Examination Board, 1970.

5. Smith, Walter Jr. _Chicano Resistance Against Schooled Ethnicity: A Case Study of Student Power in Historical Perspective_. doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1977.

6. Mobility of high school graduates was studied in North and South Town by collecting a list of graduates at five-year-intervals, beginning in 1930 to the present. Once lists were developed, ex-principals, counselors and community leaders were consulted. The occupation of the father, post-

Chapter 4

high school education completed, present residence and present occupation were established for more than 95% of the cases. The general patterns in these data are reported in the text.

7. Smith, Walter Jr. *Ibid.* This study finds similar patterns in Aztlán City.

8. The shifts in local use of ethnic terms can also be seen in the city minutes. By the early 1950's there were no more references to "Mexican Town" and "Mexicans" as opposed to Americans.

9. The residence rules for local kinship groups were determined from approximately forty life histories of women up to ninety-years old. The general discussions of Mexicano family life are based on these life histories and are supplemented with informal chats with twenty to thirty other women. Most of the life history materials were collected in two or three sessions with each woman. The time spent with each contributor ranged from four to twenty hours, the majority being from four to ten hours. Other material was also collected throughout a year of participation in community life. In all cases the material was collected by a Spanish-speaking woman.

10. The descriptions of male drinking problems and frustration are not based on any psychological testing. Most of the judgements offered in this study are, therefore, representations of the way North Town Mexicanos perceived such problems. Not infrequently, women telling these stories broke into tears, as did some males who retold stories about job discrimination.

11. The trends in unemployment appear to be greatly understimated. These percentages are based on labor surveys by the regional government and by the Texas Employment Commission. The Employment Commission reports were dated 1970.

12. This estimate is based on interviews with social workers in Aztlan City and North Town and represent their estimates from local case records. Also see Appendix A, Table 4.1 *Welfare Assistance in Two South Texas Counties*.

13. *Poverty in Texas: A Report*. Office of Economic Opportunity, 1972. See Appendix A, Table 4.2 *Occupational Distribution* of Ethnic Groups in North and South County* and Table 2.1 *Median Income and Median Education With Poverty Between Ethnic Groups in Three South Texas Counties*.

14. Although no major socio-linguistic studies have been published on Chicano dialect, there are several studies in progress at the University of Texas and other institutions.

15. This material is based on the city, county and school board records of North Town.

16. This material is based on a content analysis of the school annuals of Aztlán and North Town high schools from 1955 to 1970.

Chapter 5

1. The effect of external school programs was largely determined by frequent comments of local leaders. Anglo school leaders often expressed resentment towards federal school programs and HEW. Further, we were suspected of and labeled as"HEW spies" by some local residents.

2. Post,Don, *Ethnic Competition for Control of Schools in Two South Texas Towns*. doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1975. The South Town case reported in this dissertation provides the most dramatic example of controversy over an EODC Center and program.

3. Garcia, Cris (ed) *La Causa Politica: A Chicano Reader*, South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974.

4. The general events and key personalities were reconstructed through a series of interviews with earlier LULAC leaders.

5. As indicated in chapter 3, the terms "moderate" and "radical" are used quite loosely by local political leaders. They generally refer to stylistic differences in ethnic and social relations approaches than in major philosophical differences. The terms also do not accurately locate people in specific groups. At times people labeled were in not in a given faction but were merely "sympathetic" or "acted like them."

6. These are, of course, crude estimates based on the recollections of present-day leaders.

7. Surprisingly, the city minutes recorded the scuffle, but this account was based on the recollections of participants. Several other council meetings were attended during the height of this controversy.

8. During the year that Mexicanos ran the city government, there was approximately $5,000 of unaccounted receipts. In the summer of 1973, the city's bonding company paid this settlement, but a proposed suit against two Mexicana city clerks was dropped. What happened to the money purportedly lost has not been determined.

9. It is important to note that both Mexicano and Anglo students were drug users, and many of the main dealers were Mexicanos. Anglos often perceived the drug problem to be that"Mexican pushers were getting our children hooked on drugs." Conversely, Mexicano parents oftened complained that "Anglo kids set a bad example for our children."

10. Approximately 90% of the 1800 registered Anglo veters went to the polls.

11. The accusations made by both sides were not verified. The Civil Rights Commission is presently investigating the voting irregularities which occurred during these North Town elections. It seemed to us that both sides, in the heat of political battle, used whatever means necessary to win. South Texas politics can and does become "rough" and those familiar with local politics expect "irregularities."

Chapter 5

12. We estimated that approximately 65 % of North Town Mexicanos were "neutral." This is not based on a careful survey of community political preferences, and the definition of "neutral" includes a variety of people. Some "neutral" voters are secret "Raza sympathizers", but most people who called themselves "neutral" seemed to be genuinely uncommitted. Some were tired of politics. Others wanted to avoid conflict. Others were indifferent to either side. More studies of the motives and preferences of "neutrals" are clearly needed.

13. Shockley, John. Revolt in a South Texas Town. South Bend, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974; José Angel Gutiérrez. Toward A Theory of Community Organization In A Mexican-American Community in South Texas. doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1976.

14. This estimate is based on discussions with leaders, the opposition, and attendance of four meetings. It became evident that the BGL had very few prominent Mexicano leaders in their organization. The parallels were strikingly similar to the attempted Anglo-Mexican-American coalition in Aztlán City called CAASA from 1963 to 1969. For more discussion of CAASA see Smith, Walter Jr. Ibid and John Shockley, Ibid.

15. It should be noted that only one fieldworker was present during the 1973 campaign, whereas three fieldworkers were present during the 1974 campaign. To a degree the judgements about the 1973 campaign invariably reflect the deeper experience gained in 1974.

16. This section is based on frequent attendance of school board meetings and many hours of conversation with all members.

17. Originally, both Anglo candidates reportedly proposed to use this vote splitting tactic. By election time only one candidate actually ran and did get more than a hundred votes, which Mexicanos interpreted as "spliting our Mexicano vote."

18. This judgement is based on no fieldwork in the schools during 1972-1973. We were refused entry until 1973-1974. After a year of discussion with various board members, Professor Foley was allowed to observe in the schools. This was done after a public presentation of the research to the board and a review of the research proposal. Neither Anglos or Mexicanos were entirely comfortable with having researchers in their troubled schools and community, but they did recognize some possible utility and seemed to generally have high regard for faculty and students connected with the University of Texas.

19. Generally we were able to gain much greater access to the Ciudadanos group than to the BGL. This was primarily due to the trust that Ciudadanos leaders had in Ms Mota and Mr. Lozano, both very sensitive field workers. Conversely, Mr. Foley was less able to gain the trust of BGL leaders. Many other Anglos less actively involved in the BGL leadership such as teachers, other professionals, some old-time leaders and "marginal" Anglos were quite open and helpful, however. These differences in access are undoubtedly reflected in the emphasis in this study.

Chapter 6

1. Following the political battle between Mexicanos and Anglos on a daily basis involved attending many public meetings and frequent informal, "off the record" discussions with leaders from each group. In some sense the major way data was collected was to be "plugged into" the gossip networks of each group. Since many opinions collected were indeed slanted, constant checking and cross-checking of the materials occurred. In the text some of these "opinions" are simply reported to illustrate how different residents perceived community events. At other times we attempt to report a community event "as it really happened." In this part of the narrative we have "combined" the reports of different points of view with our own and come up with a single description or interpretation of "what really happened." Of course, considerable judgement comes into play when trying to give one account of a community event.

2. Although some residents would debate this characterization, even the administrative director of the center expressed such sentiments.

3. The judgement rendered here is based on considerable informal observation of the administrators and teachers involved. If they were as culpable as the Chicano Times indicated, that judgement was not based on any discussion with or observation of their reactions to the reported events. They acted more embarrassed and dumbfounded than guilty.

4. In order to disguise the town, the exact article will not be cited. Serious researchers can obtain this information from Professor Foley at the University of Texas.

5. The parallels in this case towards a unified leadership and the Aztlán case are striking. In both cases the existing leadership group, when seriously threatened, were able to unify local services to a degree under one policy-making group, thereby making local government more "planned" and complimentary.

6. This judgement was, of course, very difficult to make. Neither side was above arm-twisting, threats and intimidation. It should be noted that one Raza Unida leader, Mr. Alonzo apparently lost his job as a labor contractor for his political activities. Several other Mexicano businessmen were reportedly "talked to" about losing loans and business, but apparently nothing happened to them.

7. A much more detailed discussion of life in the North Town schools will be presented in subsequent publications. This discussion is a general characterization of the BGL response to the La Raza threat. Since the old rationales for Anglo authority, i.e., Anglo cultural superiority, were no longer acceptable to many Mexicanos, the BGL school board had to find a new basis for being the accepted, legitimate authority over the communities' schools. They had to convince Mexicanos that they could rule fairly and objectively, hence many school policies were instituted that more traditional Anglos objected to. In some ways the school board could satisfy neither the Mexicanos nor the Anglos.

Chapter 6

8. It might be noted that although each side appeared to have much misinformation about the leaders of the other side, they were very good at finding each others hypocricies and contradictions. For example, it was amusing to Anglos that some of the most ardent Raza Unida supporters had gotten their start in business because of Anglo sponsorship. In one case a strong party member's father had apparently been the local bootlegger under the hated Sheriff Cameron. Conversely, some BGL leaders who were found of publicly expressing their fondness for Mexicanos were often described as hypocrits in regard to the manner in which they treated their maids or in their fondness for Mexicana mistresses and cantina life. No doubt, many local Mexicanos and Anglos were not above self-deception, contradiction and impropriety. Fortunately, they were quite human and falible. It is important to understand, however, how each side rationalized their own public political behavior with the sins of the other's private behavior. This most surely fed the conflict and justified heightened hostility. All of this misinformation and rationalization also made locating who were the "real" leaders exceedingly difficult if one was to rely on the simplistic approaches in the literature called "reputational" and "key decisions/events" analysis.

9. It should be noted that we never seriously pursued this question with careful data analysis of the shifts in voting trends.

10. The Dobieville Mexicanos have, however, continued to organize and have apparently avoided the factionalism of Aztlán City and of North Town. Interestingly, they are now considered a "communist threat", too since they have been able to take-over the city council and school board.

11. Smith, Walter Jr. Ibid.

12. Smith, Walter Jr. Ibid.

13. Investigations by the Civil Rights Commission will undoubtedly find irregularities under the Voting Rights Act. Both sides justified "cheating" to stop the other sides cheating. In most cases, we did not witness the actual irregular acts. The reports presented were reconstructed from interviews with the participants and members of both Ciudadanos and the BGL.

APPENDIX A

Data Tables

Community Comments

Table 1.1
General Population Trends in North County
1910-1970

Year	Mexican-American	Anglo-American	% Mex.	Total All
1910	4,320	4,575	48.6	8,895
1920	5,244	4,052	56.4	9,296
1930	5,869	3,542	62.4	9,411
1940	NA	NA	NA	NA
1950	6,250	4,107	60.3	10,351
1960	6,250	3,862	61.8	10,112
1970	7,711	3,448	69.1	11,159

1910-1970 Trends Summarized

% Population Chg. Mexican-American	% Population Chg. Anglo-American	% Pop. Chg. All - Net Migration
44.0%	-24.6%	20.3%

Source: U.S. Census

TABLE 1.2

Farms in North County
Classified by tenure: 1900, 1910, 1920, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969*

Year	Owner-Operated+		Manager	Farm Tenants				Unspecified
				Share++	Cropper	Share-Cash	Cash	
1900	294		16	60	--	--	24	--
1910	337		14	538	--	6	7	--
1920	1981		4	829	192	--	16	5
	Full	Part		(All Tenancy Combined)**				
1954	269	145	3	124				--
1959	181	151	4	88				--
1964	194	122	--	50				--
1969	268	149	--	101				--

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* Data not available for intervening years. ** Tables for these years (1964, 1969) list all types of tenancy together, and divide ownership into "full" and "part".

+ 1900 Category of "part-owner" is included under category of "owner"

++ Category of "standing renter" is close to "share-tenant" and so is included there

SOURCES:
1900 - 12th Census of U. S., 1900, Vol. 5, Agriculture, Pt. 1, Farms, Livestock, and Animal Products, Table 10.
1910 - 13th Census of U. S., 1910, Vol VII, Agriculture, Reports by States, with Statistics for Counties, Table 2.
1920 - 14th Census of U. S., 1920, Vol VI, Part 2, Agriculture
1954 - United States Census of Agriculture, Texas, Vol I, Part 26, 1955
1959 - United States Census of Agriculture, Texas, Vol I, Part 37, 1960.
1964 - United States Census of Agriculture, Texas, Vol I, Part 37 (?) 1965.
1969 - United States Census of Agriculture, Texas.

TABLE 1.3

Crop and Livestock Data for North County
1900, 1910, 1920, 1935, 1945,
1954, 1959, 1964, 1969

COUNTY	Staple Cash Crops			Perishable Cash Crops			FORAGES	LIVESTOCK		
North	Cotton	Peanuts	Grains	Vegetables *($Value)	Fruits & Nuts[1]	Potatoes	Hay, Feed	Cattle(#)	$ Value all Livestock	All Other(#)
	(Bales)	(tons)	(tons)		(tons)	(tons)	(tons)	(number head)		(number head)
900- output	2,616	(lbs) 115	709	$ 3,045	---	13	6,539	53,927		15,263
acreage	13,764a	2 a	5,600a	74a	---	8a	3,606a		$1,089,786	
910- output	6,822	11	132	$ 6,498	3	---	3,158	13,335		3,656
acreage	52,057a	27a	3,123a	330a	---	---	3,909a		$ 352,337(2)	
920- output	4,303	11	8,667	$ 208,222	20	332	16,304	33,172		5,310
acreage	55,349a	60a	15,210a	762a	---	218a	11,323a		$2,776,275	
935- output	713	1,330	5,690	$ 6,315	7	27	9,353	45,522		12,481
acreage	6,056a	8,975a	5,097a	2,894a	292a	18a	16,207a		no figures	
945- output	--	4,325	5,992	$ 633,193	35	---	1,601	45,857		9,388
acreage	--	19,395a	16,306a	11,500a	337a	---	6,800a		$2,567,979	
954- output	3,002	2,114	5,343	$ 195,860	30	994	14,474	46,074		10,469
acreage	5,539a	10,961a	9,569a	5,093a	52a	154a	13,032a		$2,048,953	
959- output	3,260	7,641	29,534	$ 505,904	83	862	8,602	38,354		7,998
acreage	5,539a	13,444a	25,451a	6,178a	114a	226a	3,712a		$3,351,227	
964- output	3,772	19,064	15,256	$1,134,099	8	1,813	24,975	48,686		3,874
acreage	3,134a	16,707a	15,017a	8,698a	32a	203a	10,550a		$3,379,741	
969- output	2,084	21,960	415,989	$1,527,844	22	2,557	9,375	68,424		8,692
acreage	2,573a	17,596	22,462a	10,193a	338a	397a	6,090a		$11,621,715(3)	

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[1] "Acres" for Fruits and Nuts = "Land in fruit and nut trees"
[2] "Sale of all live animals" as opposed to $value of animals in other years
[3] Figure includes poultry sales for this year.

SOURCES: Table 1.3 Crop and Livestock Data for North County, 1900, 1910, 1920, 1935, 1945, 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969.

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1. 1900: Agricultural Census Report, Vol. VI, Pt. 2, Crops & Irrigation, Sections I-VI, Tables 10, 15, 22. Livestock, Vol. V, Pt. 1, Table 35
2. 1910: Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census-Agriculture. Vol. VII, Table 4. Livestock, County Table 2.
3. 1920: Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census-Agriculture. Vol. VI, Part 2. County Table 2, 4.
4. 1935: Census of Agriculture, Vol I, II, Pt. 2. County Table 2, 3, 4, 6.
5. 1945: Census of Agriculture, Vol. I, Pt. 26, Table II, Part 1, 2, 3.
6. 1954: United States Census of Agriculture, Texas, Vol I, Pt. 26. County Table 7, 9.
7. 1959: United States Census of Agriculture, Texas, Vol I, Pt. 37, County Table 4, 7, 8, 13, 24, 11.
8. 1964: U.S. Department of Commerce, Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census. Vol 1, Part 37, Sec. 2. Table #4, 8, 7, 13, 24.
9. 1969: U.S. Department of Commerce, Social and Economic Statistics Administration, Bureau of the Census, Vol 1, Part 37, Sec. 2, Table #4, 8, 7, 13, 24.

DEFINITIONS:

GRAINS: includes corn, sorghum grain, oats, kafir corn & milo maize, broom corn, wheat (add in 1945), barley and flaxseed (add in 1959)

VEGETABLES: garden variety

FRUITS & NUTS: apples, peaches & nectarines, pears, plums & prunes, grapes, figs, oranges & grapefruits (add in 1934)*, pecans

POTATOES: Irish, sweet, plain, yams (add in 1920)

* In 1934 oranges and grapefruits were reported in "Boxes" for which we could find no conversion to Tons, so they were not included in that year.

TABLE 2.1

A Comparison of Median Family Income and Median Education, With Poverty[1] Between Ethnic groups in Three South Texas Counties 1970

Counties	Median School yrs. complete (25 years and over)		Median Family Income (dollars)		Percent of all families less than poverty threshold
	Spanish	Total	Spanish	Total	Spanish
North					
1960	2.3	6.5	1666	2676	80.7
1970	4.5	8.8	3724	4926	51.6
South					
1960	1.4	4.8	1585	2296	80.1
1970	3.5	7.0	3000	4056	65.2
Model					
1960	2.3	4.6	1732	2314	82.3
1970	3.1	5.2	3984	4981	52.7

Poverty level threshold is measured by the U.S. Census at $3888. The computation used here is a more conservative threshold of $2999. This has made the computation easier and probably accounts for regional variation.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1970, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Texas, PC(1) C-45, Tables 133, 124, 120. 1960, Characteristics of the Population, Vol. 1, Part 45, Tables 83,86; Selected Reports, Persons of Spanish Surname, Texas, Table 14.

Table 3.1

Rural-Urban Migration Rates for North County, 1930-1970

	Rural	Urban	Percentage Change
1930	72.7	27.3	
1940	65.6	34.4	7.1
1950	56.8	43.2	8.8
1960	51.1	48.9	5.7
1970	48.7	51.3	2.4

Total percent of change from 1930 to 1970: 24 %

Source:

1940 U.S. Population Census

1950 U.S. Population Census, Vol. II, Characteristics of the Population, part 43, Texas, Table 5.

1960 U.S. Population Census, Vol. II, Characteristics of the Population, part 43, Texas, Table 6.

1970 U.S. Population Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Texas PC(1)-c45, Table 43.

Table 3.2

Number and Acreage of Irrigated Farms in North County 1954, 1959, 1964, 1969

Years	Number of Irrigated Farms	Proportion of all farms (%)	Land in Irrigated Farms (acres)	Average Size of Farm (acres)
1954	41	7.6	69,371	1692.0
1959	91	21.5	142,265	1563.4
1964	not given	not given	not given	not given
1969	129	24.9	212,855	1650.0

Source: U. S. Department of Agriculture, U. S. Bureau of the Census

Table 3.3

Fertility in North County by Ethnic Group, 1970

CHILDREN EVEN BORN	Spanish-Surname	Anglo
women 35-44, ever married	331	209
children even born	1,865	588
per 1,000 women ever married (%)	5.6%	2.8%

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census. General Social and Economic Characteristics, Texas PC(1)-C45, Tables 120, 130

[1] Anglo figures computed by subtracting Spanish-Surname (table 130) from County total (table 120).

Table 3.4

Live Births and Deaths in North County by Ethnic Group
1970-1972

County/Year	Total Births	Total Deaths	Mexican-American Births	Mexican-American Deaths	Anglo Births	Anglo Deaths
North						
1970	294	93	238	46	56	47
1971	272	81	234	38	38	43
1972	269	101	220	54	49	47
Totals	835	275	692	138	143	147
Crude Birth Rate	73.4		86.5		42.5	
Crude Death Rate		24.2		17.2		43.7
Reproductive Change Rate	49.2		69.3		-1.2	

SOURCE: Texas Vital Statistics, 1970-1972, Texas State Department of Health, Austin, Texas

Table 3.5

Spanish-Surname Population of North County by Nativity and Parentage* 1950-1970

Nativity and Parentage	Population			Population			% Gain loss	Absolute Change 1950-1970
	1950	1960	1970	1950	1960	1970		
Natives of Native Parentage	5542	5614	7711	88.7	89.9	92.2	3.5	1569
Natives of Foreign or Mixed Parentage	0	17	0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0
Foreign Born	708	619	600	11.3	9.9	7.3	-3.5	108
Total	6250	6250	7711	100.0	100.0	100.0		

* Census data is not specific in each category, especially "natives of foreign or mixed parentage." However, the data does present a "crude" indication of migratory changes.

SOURCE: U. S. Bureau of the Census. (1) 1950, Special Report, P.E. #3c, Persons of Spanish Surname, Texas, table 7; (2) 1960, Special Report, Persons of Spanish Surname, Texas, table 15; (3) 1970, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Texas, PC(1)-C45, table 130.

Table 3.6

Out-Migration Rates and College Attendance of Mexicano and Anglo High School Graduates in Two South Texas Towns.

Year & Ethnic Unit	Total all	Never left	Left		Left and Never Came back	% Leaving
			came back & stayed	came back & left again		
1940 class	27	4	2	6	15	77.8%
Anglos	25	4	2	5	14	76.0
Mexican-American	2	0	0	1	1	100.0
1948 Class	24	3	1	6	14	83.3
Anglo	21	2	1	5	13	85.7
Mexican-American	3	1	0	1	1	66.6
1955 Class	30	4	0	4	22	86.7
Anglo	19	2	0	2	15	89.5
Mexican-American	11	2	0	2	7	81.8
1958 Class	38	4	3	4	27	81.6
Anglo	23	0	1	4	17	91.3
Mexican-American	15	4	2	0	10	66.6
1964 Class	46	6	1	4	35	84.8
Anglo	25	4	0	4	17	84.0
Mexican-American	21	2	1	0	18	85.7
1969 Class	43	11	2	4	26	69.8
Anglo	22	5	1	2	13	68.2
Mexican-American	21	6	1	2	13	71.4

Source: primary research, Don E. Post

Table 4.1
Welfare Assistance in Two South Texas Counties

County	Total $	Old Age Assistance	Number Families	Aid to Families with Dependent Children	Number Families	Number Children	Aid to Blind	Number Blind	Aid to Permanently & Totally Disabled	Number Disabled
North										
1972	662,487	339,719	522	275,912	230	600	6,343	7	40,513	51
1971	660,043	383,661	521	232,266	183	523	5,932	5	38,184	47
1970	576,909	371,846	492	165,362	146	444	6,314	7	33,387	46
1969	453,461	331,793	477	84,409	87	269	7,728	9	29,531	44
1965	319,838	264,302	369	36,363	33	122	7,189	10	11,984	17
1960	261,268	198,143	310	51,625	49	150	4,927	8	6,573	11
1955	195,984	128,627	276	63,051	85	252	4,306	11	--	--
1950	9,799.26	7,228.50	231	2,325.76	51	138	245.00	9	--	--
South										
1972	439,639	218,275	307	172,374	124	347	7,162	8	41,828	63
1971	453,881	249,143	310	161,440	120	374	7,333	7	35,965	49
1970	406,182	246,362	302	120,690	93	287	8,320	8	30,810	48
1969	323,953	226,653	302	68,282	64	199	6,936	8	22,082	37
1965	210,168	139,903	201	56,162	55	151	7,097	9	7,006	11
1960	181,125	128,606	200	44,292	49	127	5,872	8	2,355	4
1955	137,525	83,400	179	49,288.50	66	188	4,837	10	--	--
1950	7,606.32	4,918	154	2,381.82	55	144	306.50	9	--	--

[1] Source: Annual Report of the State Department of Public Welfare, To the Governor of Texas, Fiscal year September 1, 1971-August 31, 1972.

Table 4.2

Occupational Distribution* of Ethnic Groups in North and South Counties, 1970

Occupations	North County		South County	
	Spanish Surname	Anglo	Spanish Surname	Anglo
Professional & technical	3.1	21.2	2.9	25.8
Managers & Admin.	5.0	10.3	4.9	18.0
Clerical & Sales	10.1	23.7	10.9	13.0
Craftsmen & foremen	13.8	11.4	11.1	13.0
Semi-skilled	17.4	10.1	26.2	1.9
Farmers & farm managers	5.9	15.9	2.0	13.2
Farm workers	23.7	4.6	16.5	3.0
Service workers	14.8	2.8	15.5	11.9
Private household workers	6.0	0	10.0	0.2
TOTAL	100.0 (1998)	100.0 (1353)	100.0 (889)	100.0 (462)

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* distribution occupationally of all employed 16 years and over.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1970, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC(1)-C45, Tables 122, 122.